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Editorial

There are some who consider that role-playing games are just a cop-out — that they are for people who are unable to cope with life as it is.

The interesting thing is that all those who have talked to me like this spend their time either watching TV or burying themselves in romantic novels or whodunnits. Other worlds indeed.

We all need to spend time away from the day-to-day cares of living, and rpgs are an ideal way of renewing the zest for life. This magazine is for you — indeed, much of it is written by people who didn't dream of writing for magazines before — and we have filled it with new ideas to help you create better adventures for your characters. Enjoy yourself!

Keith Thomson

Contents

The Art of Animation, by Mark N O Davies
Golems and their making — including eight new monsters 2

Geas, by Venetia Lee
Incorporating the magic user spell into your enchantments 8

PELINORE — **the IMAGINE™ magazine Campaign World**
***THIS MONTH**: Law and Order – "Justice" in the City League* 10
The North Docklands District Courthouse 13

The Private Lives of NPCs, by Katino
Another look at what the other side are up to between adventures 16

Illuminations, news from the world of gaming 19

Notices — recent game releases examined by independent reviewers 20

Sinvel's Peril, by Doug Cowie
Try out the new Companion Set rules with this high-level scenario 25

Role-Playing for Remedials, by Alan Heaven
Role-playing in the classroom 34

Towards Systemless Scenarios, by Pete Tamlyn
Ideas for the future — including a Celtic-style scenario plot 36

Games Without Frontiers, by Graeme Davis
Part Two of the series designed to show you how to balance the numbers in different role-playing systems 38

Dispel Confusion, RPG rules questions answered 39

Uncharted Stars / Amber Zone, by Paul Vernon
An alternative idea for generating adventures for the **Traveller** game plus an exciting scenario to follow 42

Fantasy Media, by Colin Greenland
The latest on books, films and videos 47

Letters 48

VOP, by Ian Gibbs 49

Game Company, Clubs & Events 50

Rubic of Moggedon 50

Stirge Corner, by Roger Musson 51

Dialog, by Lew Pulsipher 51

Press Clippings — Starting a new space for the hobby to air its views plus full fanzine review coverage 52

Turnbull Talking 54

Phalanx, by Robin Grenville-Evans 55

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..... Editor **Keith Thomson** ..... Assistant Editor **Paul Cockburn** .....
..... Editorial Assistant **Kim Daniel** ..... Features Assistant **Mike Brunton** .....
..... Art **Phil Kaye** ..... Advertising **Lesley Hudson-Jessop** .....
..... News **Doug Cowie** .....
..... This month's contributing artists: **Robin Grenville Evans, Paul Ruiz, Dave Pearson, Euan Smith, Pete Young, Ian Gibbs, Ian Williamson** .....
..... Cover **CC Spec 1** by Chris Collingwood .....

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The Art of Animation

by Mark Davies

Frankenstein's monster was galvanized into activity. Duncan Idaho as a Tleilaxu ghola, (from Frank Herbert's **Dune** series), had life re-established through the secret arts of the Tleilaxu guild. One of the most famous golems of legend, the giant, bull-headed, bronze Talos, was placed on the island of Crete by the greek god Zeus to act as guardian. Not all such creatures are found in human form. In Tanith Lee's **Death's Master**, Lylas, the handmaiden of Lord Death, lives with a blue enamel dog that acts as her servant and has the gift of speech.

What do all these creatures have in common? Well, they all represent the creation of an animate being from inanimate matter; usually through the use of magic. Of course not all 'golems' need to be such monumental achievements. The basic concept is seen behind the tale of Goethe's **Sorcerer's Apprentice**, as well as favourites like **Pinocchio** and **The Wizard of Oz**. The emphasis in fiction and in the D&D games is that the 'golem' is created almost inevitably in the image of man, but should this be the case?

What's in a Name?

The word *golem* appears in the Hebrew language and occurs in the Old Testament (Psalm 139.16), where it means a human being that is incompletely formed. It also appears in the Talmud (the body of Jewish law and legend) describing Adam's body prior to life and consciousness. It is not until much later in history that the word became synonymous with the end product of magical procedures involved in creating a 'living being'.

Golem Evolution

Since *golem* originated as a Hebrew word, what of the Jewish legends? As reported by Grimm in his **Journal for Hermits** (1408), the golem is a thing constructed of mud or clay. It seems that such beings were mostly, but not exclusively, in the guise of man. Such manufactured creatures were inarticulate save a rare few, but all could understand limited speech, in the form of commands. They were used as servants, although they were not allowed to wander. A drawback of such retainers was the uncanny property of the golem to grow larger each day!

Every golem had inscribed upon its forehead the word *emeth* meaning 'truth'. To deactivate a golem, and thus change it back into its elementary components, *emeth* had to be transformed into *meth*, which means 'he is dead'. Such a switch in words was not always a simple procedure.

One unfortunate creator it seemed, let his golem grow out of hand so that when he came to deactivate his 'art work', he found the golem had grown too tall for him to reach the creature's forehead. Therefore, he commanded the golem to remove his shoes, and while it was bending down the man rushed in and altered the wording successfully; unluckily he was crushed by the weight of clay that fell on top of him.

Around the 12th century the idea of the golem made its first showing in the Sefer

Yetsirah or 'Book of Creation'. As a result, the Hasidim of Germany (Jewish mystics) became exponents of the mystical rites required to create a golem. In all probability, regardless of its 'magical nature', the ceremony was essentially a symbolic event. However, awareness of these rituals increased, with exaggerated and incorrect interpretations being expressed in the form of folklore and legend which became widespread during the 15th century. With the growth of such myths, earlier tales of reanimating the dead and the manufacturing of homonculi were being ascribed to the golem of legend.

Review of the Golem in D&D

Initially, the epitome of a 'living being' created by magic, the golem was perceived exclusively in the mould of man. In addition it was constrained by the ruling that 'the creation of a golem involves ultra-powerful spells and elemental forces'. If this view is held then where do the homonculus (MM), necrophidius (FF) or stone guardian (MM2) come into picture? All are animated beings, but each lacks one or more of the basic ingredients of the 'true' golem. What follows is a general classification system for DMs to adapt when designing magically created protegés for their favourite spell casters. The first distinction to be made is a broad division between Reinstated and Created animation.

Reinstated Animation
This category contains those monsters that are the result of a corpse having its 'vitality' reinstated through magic. It is not created, since that which is animated already existed as a living whole. Creatures that fall under this heading are mostly different forms of non-independent undead, such as skeletons, zombies and zombie monsters (MM2), but not julu zombies (MM2) or yellow musk zombies (FF). The special case of the ghola in the Dune series is a good, if not a highly sophisticated, example.

Created Animation
Beings animated in this manner are usually in the form of man (anthropomorphic), already known as Golems, or beast (theriomorphic), which I have termed Totems. It is possible however, to produce animate 'non-living' beings, for example a witch's broom. This last group, which has been neglected to a large degree in the past, I have titled Hylem, short for hylomorphic animation. Thus created animation falls under 3 basic headings with all having their 'true' forms (ie resulting from ultra powerful spells and elemental forces), plus those that do not hold with all such requirements. For game purposes there is little difference and therefore I will largely ignore this distinction. I suggest that DMs make note for future reference in case such a division proves useful as, for example, the effects of a **rod of smiting**.

In general hylems, totems and golems are created as either guardians or menial assistants to spell casters. They undertake all commands given by their maker, although they usually lack intelligence. Most are formed by (in)famous magicians or divinely favoured clerics. Their duties and creation can be very specific at times as, for example, when constructed in the name of a specific deity (see iron cobra FF; see below black widow).

Hylems

These are objects that are animated, but are not in the form of living creatures. Hylems are seen with an ephemeral existence amongst a number of spells like: **animate object** (cleric), **animate rock** (druid), **wizard's eye** (magic user) and the magic user Bigby's hand spells. Furthermore, this animation is also present in a number of magic items, namely: **broom of animated attack**, **broom of flying**, **carpet of flying**, **loun stones**, **Quaal's feather tokens** (fan; ship), magical ropes and even a **sword of dancing**; not to mention artifacts! On top of all this there is even a monster, the Gale duhr (MM2), which has the ability to create temporary hylems. It seems that hylems are classed as magic items rather than monsters. With most examples this is very plausible, but what of those that can be given limited commands, specific to a situation, and act upon them accordingly. One such hylomorphic being is the gem hylem:

(Note: In all the monsters in this article, stats are given for both the D&D and AD&D games. Where different from Advanced figures, Basic stats are given in bold. Notes for both games follow the stats)

Gem Hylem

Frequency	*Very rare*
No. Appearing	*1*
Armour Class	*-2*
Move	*18"/18" (MC:A)* ***240' (80')***
Hit Dice	*8*
% In Lair	*Nil*
Treasure Type	*Nil*
#Attacks	*1*
Damage/Attack	*2-20*
Special Attacks	*Spells*
Special Defences	*+2 or better weapon to hit*
Magic Resistance	*40%*
Intelligence	*Semi-*
Alignment	*Neutral*
Size	*S (2-6 inches)*
Psionic Ability	*Nil*
Attack/Defence modes	*Nil*
Level/xp Value	*VII/1920* ***1200***
Save As:	***Fighter: 18***
Morale	***12***

Advanced: The makers of gem hylems are exclusively illusionists of at least 14th level. They take 1 month to create, costing 25,000gp in the process. The illusionist, assuming there is no magical tome available to enable a short cut to be taken, needs to cast the following spells: **major creation, light, fear, confusion, maze, demi-shadow magic** and **alter reality**. Like their cousins, they understand and obey all commands given by their creator.

At will, gem hylems can once per round use the following abilities: **light, fear, confusion** and **maze**; as a 10th level illusionist. In addition, the hylem can attack once per round with a lightning strike (no save) for 2-20 damage; it has a range of 6". Only hit by +2 or better weapons, but blunt weapons cause double damage. On destroying (deactivating) the hylem a 5,000gp gem will be left in its place.

Basic: The DM should follow existing campaign rules for the creation of golems. The gem hylem can, once per round, use the following abilities: **light**, **charm person** and **confusion**. Attacks and other notes as above.

Description: These animated beings appear as perfect examples of their gem type, though they are found constantly spinning furiously in the air.

Totems

This group holds a greater potential for DMs to be inventive, dealing with animations in the form of beasts. Transient examples as seen in spells are few, but include: **sticks to snakes** (cleric) and **live oak** (druid); **simulacrum** (magic user) is an example that is permanent in effect. As with hylems, there are corresponding magical items, for example, the **figurines of wonderous power** or **Quaal's feather token** (bird). Also there exist monsters that possess related powers which can induce temporary theriomorphic animation (see treant MM; algoid FF). Permanently animated theriomorphic beings are not particularly numerous in the bestiaries (see homonculus; iron cobra and necrophidius). To begin altering this discrepancy I have outlined two totems that I found entertaining as a DM.

	Rock	Black Widow
Frequency	*Very rare*	*Very rare*
No. appearing	*1*	*1*
Armour Class	*2*	*6*
Move	*Variable*	*24"/15" **150' (50')***
Hit Dice	*Variable*	*7*
% in lair	*Nil*	*Nil*
Treasure Type	*Nil*	*Nil*
# Attacks	*Variable*	*1*
Damage/Attack	*1-10*	*Variable*
Special Attacks	*Variable*	*Poison*
Special Defences	*See below*	*See below*
Magic Resistance	*See below*	*See below*
Intelligence	*Average*	*Average*
Alignment	*Neutral*	*Neutral*
Size	*Variable*	*S (2' diameter)*
Psionic ability	*Nil*	*Nil*
Attack/Defence modes	*Nil*	*Nil*
Level/xp value	*Variable*	*V11/1415 **850***
Save As:	***Cleric: 9***	***Fighter: 5***
Morale:	***12***	***12***

Rock Totem

Advanced: These are fashioned from rock in the guise of the animal chosen by the creator. They can only be constructed by name-level Druids, unless a magical tome is employed. These totems are slightly unusual in the fact that they are intelligent, can think for themselves and are capable of speech. They are totally loyal to their maker.

The type of animal sculpted can be anything from the range which the druid himself can **shape change** into. It takes 1 month to construct such a totem and requires the following spells to be cast: **detect poison, shape rock, animate rock, commune with nature** and **reincarnate**. The only material cost incurred by the druid is the need of 2 jewels (worth 5,000gp each) for the eyes.

Totems communicate in both common and druidic tongue. They possess average intelligence and wisdom, so that the finished totem mimics the chosen animal in all attributes excluding mentality. If the creator concentrates upon his totem while it is within 20" he will be able to see through its eyes. All rock totems can **detect poison**; as a 6th level druid.

A rock totem can only be hit by +3 or better weapons. Furthermore, only a limited retinue of spells can actually affect them: **rock to mud** will destroy the totem if it fails its save vs. spell, while **stone to flesh** change its armour class to that of the mimicked animal. For example, if the druid had created a rock totem in the form of a stag (MM), then the armour class change would be from 2 to 7. This change is permanent unless the magic is dispelled or reversed. All rock totems save as 12th level druids.

Basic: As above (using campaign rules for the creation of the totem), except that **passwall** is the only spell that will destroy it. Also, the rock totem can **neutralize poison** three times a month.

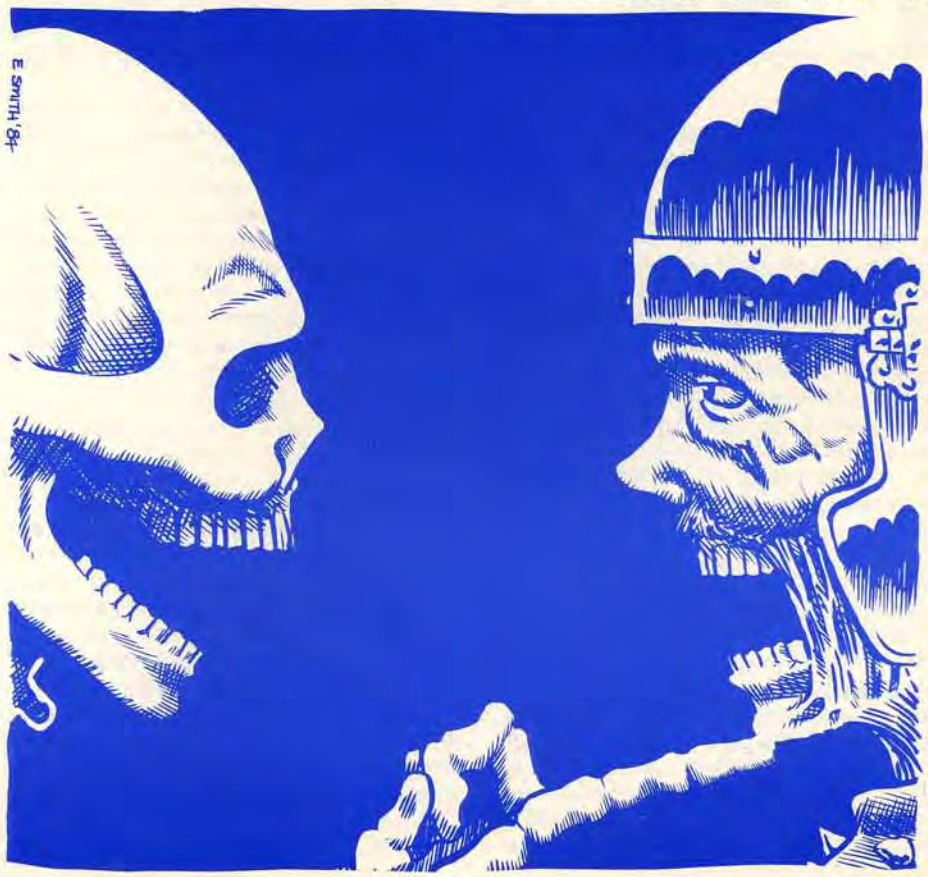
Black Widow

Advanced: This totem is specifically constructed by noble drow (FF), who honour Lolth (FF) as their patron deity. Its creation is unusual because it requires cooperation between a male drow magic user and a female drow cleric. The former needs to be of at least 12th level, while the cleric must have attained 11th level. First a black opal and a ruby, worth at least 5,000gp each, must be sought. When obtained, they are then crafted into a black spider with a red cross central on its abdomen. This is then followed by the casting of the spells from both cleric and mage. The mage spells required are: **web** and **reincarnation**; while the cleric performs **bless, prayer, poison, commune** and **animate object**. It takes 2 months to fabricate and costs 30,000gp overall.

The totem can only be successfully controlled by the female cleric involved in its making. All others, including the assisting magic user, require a specific trigger word or action detailed by the cleric, to be able to bypass the spider without difficulty.

The Black Widow can cast once per round, over a range of 5", a normal strength **web** spell (not requiring support) at a single opponent; cast at 12th level of ability. To determine whether the target has been hit by the spider, the totem needs to roll 'to hit'. If the black widow attacks a webbed victim, the spider will automatically hit. The creature's bite does 1-10 damage and contains a virulent poison, resulting in a save at -4.

A +2 weapon or better is needed to score a successful hit on this creature and the only spell that affects the black



widow is **neutralize poison** which will deactivate the totem's poison for 1 turn (if it fails its save).

Basic: The black widow totem is the creation of chaotic elves. Other details as above.

Golems

The only example of anthropomorphic animation in the form of a spell is the magic user's permanent **simulacrum** spell. However, this group is very well represented in the AD&D monster tomes, such as the true golems, caryatid column (FF), scarecrow (FF) and stone guardian. The golem has been well documented in the past and reflects the keen interest in anthropomorphic creations. I wonder if Shelly's Frankenstein would have been as successful if the monster had been a patch-work cat or dog? Anyhow, I follow the trend of emphasising the golem as the most challenging group of created beings with this a mixed choice of new ones:

Bone Golem
Advanced: In appearance this golem is like a skeleton. It can be created only by a non-good cleric of 19th level or higher, unless a magical tome is utilised. The necessary ingredients are the appropriate bones to allow the construction of a complete, whole skeleton, which then has the following spells cast upon it: **bless, prayer, curse, commune, animate objects,** and **wither**. The minimum cost is 50,000gp, plus 100,000gp for religious rites and appropriate sacrifices. On completion, the bone golem will undertake any commands given by its master.

The creature can only be hit by piercing or edged weapons if they are +3 or better, even then they will cause normal damage to the golem. Fire attacks that would normally result in 23 points of damage or more, will effectively **slow** the golem for the next 1-4 rounds. If holy water is used against the creature successfully, it will hold the monster for 2-8 segments, but unholy water will restore 2-8 lost hit points. It is not possible to turn a bone golem, although it is equal to a 'special' in terms of a **mace of disruption**.
In combat, the golem attacks with a raking claw for 1-20 points of damage. Concurrent with the damage, the victim must save vs spell or suffer a **withering** of the portion of the body hit; it removes all flesh and leaves just the bone. If the head or torso of the victim is affected in this way then automatic death will result. Other portions will operate normally; a fighter with a skeletal hand can still hold and wield a weapon. Each such attack also results in the permanent loss of 1 point of constitution. To recover from either effect requires a cleric of at least 19th level to administer **regenerate** or **restoration**. Only one afflicted area of the body or lost point can be restored with the casting of a single spell. Therefore a character with both hands withered needs 2 **regenerate** spells to be completely cured, along with 2 **restoration** spells for lost constitution.

Basic: See the Expert Rulebook, p50.

Bronze Golem
Advanced: This is a specialised form of iron golem and requires a magic user of 18th level or higher; a magical tome could be used by one of lower level. First a specially crafted bronze cast of a hollow sphere (1' diameter) has a ruby worth at least 50,000gp placed inside through the use of the spell **vanish**. Next, **enchant an item**, **wizard lock** and **maze** spells are cast upon the sphere. The mage should then use a **polymorph any object** spell to transform the sphere into a miniature statue of a man. The finishing touch to the preparations is the casting of a **sympathy** spell. All this is in special readiness to the summoning of an individually identified para elemental (Magma), which must be 16HD. The little bronze statue is the trigger item for a **trap the soul** spell; the creature is brought to this plane using an **ensnarement** spell and is ordered to pick up the statue! Additional cost, other than the ruby is 200,000gp; it takes 6 months to complete the construction.

After trapping the magma para elemental, additional spells need to be cast upon the bronze figure: **burning hands, geas** and **wish**. The golem thus created is certainly a durable servant and guardian!

It can strike with its fists in combat for 2-20 damage. If the golem obtains a 'to hit' score 5 greater than required, it means that it can clench its fist around a small or medium sized opponent, resulting in a further 20 points of damage from fire (no save). In subsequent rounds the golem can keep hold of his victim (unlikely unless commanded specifically to do so). In this case, damage from crushing (2-20) and fire (20) will automatically accrue. Furthermore, all those within 10' of the bronze golem will be under the effects of a **heat metal** spell. A bronze golem can not only do 1 point of structural damage, but it can also hurl rocks for 1-12 damage over a range of 16".

A bronze golem can only be struck by +3 or better weapons. They are also vulnerable to a **knock** spell if it is aimed at the area between heel and ankle of either foot. The **knock** spell needs to combat the **wizard lock** of the maker. A more surprising weakness is that they are not immune to poison.

If a successful attempt is made at removing the bronze pins in either foot, the imprisoned para elemental will immediately be set free. There is only a 10% chance that it will turn on the party, for its real desire is to get revenge on the mage who imprisoned it. 1-3 rounds after it vacates the golem the latter will topple forwards or backwards (50% chance). Anyone unlucky enough to be under it at the time will be instantly killed. As with iron golems, magical fire attacks repair damage on a 1 hit point to 1 hit point basis. Cold based attacks such as **cone of cold, ice storm** and **Otiluke's freezing sphere** will **slow** the golem for 4 rounds.

Basic: See the Expert Rulebook, p50.

Rag Golem
Advanced: Unlike others of its kind the rag golem does not rely upon sheer force as a means to an end. A mere 6 inches tall, it is constructed of whatever household rags the magic user finds handy at the time. Consequently, the cost of pro-

	Bone	Bronze	Rag	Sand	Wood
Frequency	*Very rare*	*Very rare*	*Very rare*	*Very rare*	*Very rare*
No. appearing	*1*	*1*	*1*	*1*	*1*
Armour class	*7*	*0*	*10*	*4*	*0*
Move	*12"*	*18"*	*3" **30' (10')***	*10" **90' (30')***	*12"*
Hit Dice	*10 (45 HP)*	*24 (108 HP)*	*1hp*	*16 (72 HP)*	*12 (54 HP)*
% in lair	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*
Treasure type	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*
# Attacks	*1*	*2*	*Nil*	*1*	*2*
Damage/attack	*1-20*	*2-20*	*Nil*	*3-12*	*2-16*
Special Attacks	*Wither*	*Clench fist*	*Cantrips*	*Sleep*	*See below*
Special Defences	*See below*	*See below*	*See below*	*See below*	*See below*
Magic Resistance	*See below*	*See below*	*See below*	*See below*	*See below*
Intelligence	*Non-*	*Non-*	*See below*	*Non-*	*Non-*
Alignment	*Neutral*	*Neutral*	*Neutral*	*Neutral*	*Neutral*
Size	*M*	*L (24')*	*S (6')*	*L (8')*	*L (16')*
Psionic Ability	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*
Attack/Defence mode	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*
Level/xp value	*VIII/4230*	*X/25,650*	*I & up/62 **6***	*IX/11,100 **2300***	*IX/7530*
Save As:			***Fighter: 1***	***Fighter: 5***	
Morale:			***12***	***12***	

*The Bone, Bronze and Wood golems have already been detailed in the **D&D Expert Set**.*

ducing a rag golem can be as litttle as 1,000gp. Once a vaguely humanoid shape has been made the following spells must be cast: **tongues, anti-magic shell, geas, teleport without error, polymorph any object** and **wish**.

The newly-produced golem is physically fully developed, but mentally possesses only 1 point of intelligence. It gains a further point for each subsequent week of animation until the mage's own intelligence score is reached. Until then, the mage must be engaged with its upbringing, to the exclusion of other activities; any break in the process will result in deactivation of the little fellow.

On gaining its final intelligence point the ragamuffin can perform the following at will: limited telepathy with the magic user (3" range), teleport (no error), speak and comprehend any spoken language. Related to the last ability is the golem's full literacy in normal and magical script.

The rag golem has a perfect memory and knows everything its master has seen fit to teach it, including spells (from cantrips to 9th level spells). Thus a rag golem often serves as a walking spell book. Provided it is within its telepathic range, the mage can re-learn any spell in its memory (normal time required), subject to the maximum permitted by intelligence, level and magic. However, although the golem holds all its maker's spells, itself is powerless to use any except for the cantrips. The golem can cast any cantrip memorised at will.

Like its larger brethren, the rag golem is immune to most magical attacks, apart from spells cast by its creator and the various Bigby's hand spells. On top of this, these little monsters are immune to physical attack, be it due to weapon, fire, acid or whatever. Fortunately for the magic user, they are completely loyal.

If required the golem will use its own initiative to achieve its master's ends. Over time it will develop its own personality, invariably humorous and mischievous, often mimicking the idiosyncrasies and foibles of its creator. Even so, the golem will never behave in a deleterious manner towards its maker. No matter how its personality develops the golem's alignment remains neutral.

If its master dies, a rag golem will set off alone into the big world. As a source of spells such a wandering rag golem is a prize find. However, it is now 'freelance', it must be enticed into cooperation. A 'rogue' rag golem will work with a magic user they find worthy, but not for him!

Basic: As above. The rag golem can only be damaged by spells cast by its creator. It has no magical ability of its own.

Sand Golem

Advanced: A sand golem can only be created by a 16th level chaotic evil cleric, or one greater in levels (unless working from a magical tome). The material components for this creation are the bodies of a sandling (MM2) and a sandman (FF), which must be emulsified in the life fluids of a dune stalker (FF). After the production of the emulsion the following spells must be cast: **command, curse, prayer, commune, animate objects** and **resurrection**. The materials for this procedure cost 30,000gp, while the cost of the accompanying ceremonies is a minimum of 10,000gp.

After creation the sand golem is under the total control of the cleric that made it. It is usually employed as a guard of some precious item(s) or unholy place. It is well built for such a job since the golem can only be successfully struck with +2 or better blunt weapons, edged or piercing arms need to be +3 or better and even then will only inflict half the weapon damage plus its bonus. Strength bonuses only apply to the blunt weapons. Furthermore, sand golems are immune to all forms of magic unless they are water-based, the latter form of attack will **slow** the creature for as many rounds equal to the level of the spell.

Its own offensive capabilities rely on its ability to hit an opponent. Striking with its fist it causes 3-12 points of damage to be suffered. In addition, the victim must save vs spell or fall into a catatonic sleep. Those that fail their save will remain asleep for 3 turns no matter what is done to them. After this time, there is a 10% chance per round, if an attempt is made to wake them, of the sleepers being revived. If no such attempt is made then the victims will not wake of their own accord and will slowly fade and die.

Basic: As above.

Wood Golem

Advanced: These are powerful creations, produced by druids of 13th level or higher. Of course a lesser druid could manufacture one with the aid of a magical tome. Their construction begins with the druid choosing a suitable sapling. It is best if a treant (MM) is enlisted as adviser in this venture, since the latter's perfect knowledge of the properties of all trees and saplings under his care will ensure total success. Of course there must be a very valid reason for such action or else the treant will flatly refuse to help and may even actively hinder the druid's actions. if the druid 'goes it alone', then there is a 1% chance per year of a boggart (MM2) which is ready to metamorphose into a will-o-wisp (MM), entering the golem in preparation for its pupation. Its usual choice are the sentient types of plant life, such as young treants or even the hangman tree (MM2). Under such possession the golem acts in a most chaotic evil manner for 2-5 months, at the end of this period the golem 'dies' as the boggart leaves as a fully fledged adult.

In either case, once a sapling has been selected the following spells must then be cast by the druid: **entangle, plant growth, control temperature 10' radius, protection from lightning, live oak, commune with nature, reincarnate** and **transmute metal to wood**. There is little cost to this procedure since most of what is required is all around the druid.

To be able to hit a wood golem a +3 or better weapon is needed unless an axe is wielded, in which case only a +1 weapon is required. Blunt weapons cause only half damage when a successful hit is attained. As with others of its kind, the wood golem is very resilient when faced with magical attacks. **Warp wood**, if the golem fails its save, will cause it to strike at -2 for 2-8 rounds. **Hold plant** will **slow** the golem for 1-6 rounds, but **turn wood** will have no effect.

In melee, each time it hits an opponent, if inflicts 2-16 points worth of damage and has the power to **transmute metal to wood**. This is also the case for any metal that touches the golem. As a further aid against its foes, the golem also can cast an **entangle** spell once every turn. If necessary the golem can cause 1 point of structural damage.

In the introduction I made the point that the emphasis in the past seemed to be on an anthropomorphic approach to animation. I have not deviated from this line in this article. Most encounters will quite often be best served by incorporating a golem as the formidable servant to be confronted, but this need not always be the case. Some gods for example, only materialise in animal form; should not their clerics produce a totem in their honour (see Raven; American Indian mythos; **DDG**), rather than a golem?

The D&D game revolves around diversity and this should be expressed within a species of monster as well as between such groupings. Under the influence of a DM's inventive mind, the ramifications can be endless, touching on magical items, ideas for adventures and even stimulus for further expanding the art of animation.

Basic: See the Expert Rulebook, p50.

Mark Davies

Rag golem co-written with Derrick Norton

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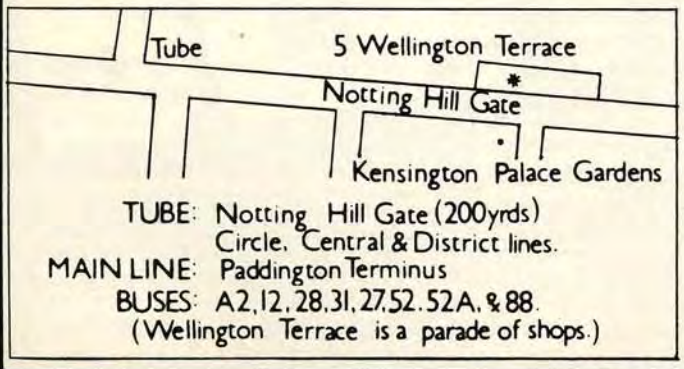

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GEAS

by Venetia Lee

The dark clad wizard towered over the trembling halfling. 'Bungle. I've sent for you to reward you for obtaining this trinket for me.' He idly swung the Amulet of Life Protection by its chain.

'Th-thank you, Kelvin.' Bungle Hairfoot stammered, casting a longing look towards the door. 'But I'll be happy enough if you'll just accept all debts wiped out between us, and I'll be on my way.'

'Nonsense, Bungle. Please accept these gloves that I've made for you. Perhaps they'll help you keep your hands out of traps, and in treasure chests.'

To Bungle it was just like a charm from a vampire. He forgot all about keeping out of Kelvin's reach, snatched the gloves and ran to the door (just in cast the wizard changed his mind), but as his fingers scrabbled for the handle, he stopped and looked back.

'Why is there a voice in my head insisting that I should bring you the lost Wand of Jaggeroth?'

In #12 of **IMAGINE**™ magazine, Chris Felton's article **Enchantment for Beginners** gave some suggestions about the manufacture of magical items. I would like to add a little post script to this idea, namely the effect of incorporating the sixth level magic-user spell **geas** into the enchantment process. A geas is a means of limiting the power of an item without rendering it totally undesirable to everyone — providing a sting in the tale. This can be particularly useful to DMs who (like me) enjoy designing interesting, powerful magical items, but don't want to see player-characters knocking down trolls like they were kobolds.

Geased items also add an entirely reasonable defence to help a character retain an item. If Chris' ideas for the creation of a +4 defender were followed, three 4th level **enchanted weapons**, three 6th level **enchant an items**, two 7th level **extension IIIs**, two 8th level **permanencies** and three 9th level **wishes** would have gone into the mix, along with all the expensive material components and with a high risk that one or more parts of the process would have gone wrong as a saving throw was failed.... With all this requiring a 22nd level magic user, why should the manufacturer not then choose to include the additional protection that a geas affords — namely, that should the item end up in the wrong hands, it will be returned, since the wielder is compelled to return it to the hands of the owner....

That is one minor use for geas. Chris, you will recall, suggested that geas would be part of the process for creating a beserker sword. This kind of trap is direct and instantaneous. The person who takes up the weapon is compelled to act in a certain direction. Bungle's gloves in the example above are standard **gauntlets of dexterity** with a geas cast on them to operate on the first person to wear them. Used in this way — operating on the first, second or ninety-fifth owner of the article — counts as one extraordinary power for the purposes of the enchantment; a geas acting on all future owners counts as two extraordinary powers (Chris suggested that **limited wish** would allow for the addition of two extraordinary powers to the item, while **wish** would allow four).

Naturally, the presence of the geas on the item might not be immediately apparent to the new owner. An **identify** spell might reveal the geas unless it were protected by another wish. If this additional spell is not cast, the geas will be 'visible', and the finder might then choose to use the item (accepting the restriction), destroy it or give it away. If the geas is concealed, then there should be no way of discovering its presence, except as a nasty surprise!

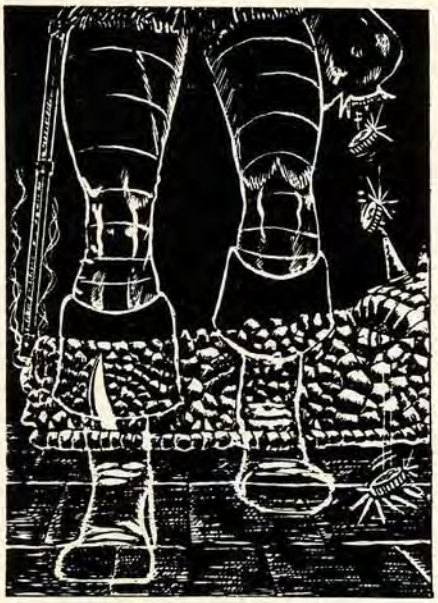
There are many reasons for a magic user to include a geas in the making of an item, beyond mere protectionism of the type already described. The following four are just the beginning:

1. The magic user (or the client making the purchase) might want to ensure that the wrong kind of person does not use the item. Restricting the alignment of those who can handle the item is one way, but more precise instructions could be keyed into a geas. Certain actions could be prohibited; stealing, killing paladins — or encouraged. Clerics could find the geas technique very useful in encouraging the worship of the right deity....
2. The magic user might be making the item for another person under pressure, or through coercion, and could decide to include the catch as a means of revenge.
3. A magic user could be otherwise powerless to ensure that another person fufilled a request or order — or it could be an opening act of treachery against a friend.
4. A deity might decide to intervene to restrict the power of an item intended for use by some upstart mortal.

Naturally, for a DM, such a magic item is just the beginning of another sub-plot in the campaign. In the two part series **The Sentinel** and **The Gauntlet** (UK2-3), these two powerful magical items are the key to the whole adventure. Instead of giving the items high intelligences and egos, a less powerful magic user might have just geased them during the enchantment process. The following suggestions will hopefully persuade a few of you to try bringing these interesting ideas into your campaign.

Bowl of Ship Sinking
This bowl, when filled with crystal clear water, allows the owner to command the most powerful kind of 16 hit dice water elemental (unlike the standard **bowl of commanding water elementals**). It was created by a mighty mage in a city-port beset by pirates, and given to the ruler. However, the Elemental Princess Olhydra was instrumental in causing a geas to be placed upon the bowl, being anxious to preserve the status quo, such that anyone commanding the elemental to his service would unleash it on the first three ships sighted, before any free choice could be made. The geas was revealed — in the most tragic circumstances — when the bowl was first used, and since then it has been locked away.

The manufacture of this bowl requires the casting of **enchant an item**, **conjure elemental** and **permanence**. The geas in this case was was placed on the item during the manufacturing process by another — something which can easily happen unless precautions are taken.



The Boots of Gentle Thievery
These boots are like standard **boots of elvenkind** in effect. However, the wearer cannot use violence in the course of stealing, nor allow accomplices to do so. Hence, to obey the geas, if the wearer is attacked in the middle of a robbery, he must either flee, abandon the stolen items (which could not then be recovered after the fight), or spend the first few rounds getting out of the boots. Such an item might be the perfect gift for a magic user to give to a thief of dubious morality.

The boots are created by the casting of **enchant an item** on a pair of finely worked leather boots, preferably of elven manufacture, followed by the casting of **silence, 15' radius** by a cleric, **permanence** and **geas**. With the enchantment complete, the silence applies only to the wearer of the boots.

Sword of Surrender
This was made for a once-mighty king by his court Wizard. It is a powerful weapon with sundry interesting characteristics, whatever is suitable for a particular campaign. Unfortunately for the King, the Wizard was a traitor, and had been bribed to make the weapon turn against his master. The day came when the King faced his enemies in a battle he was sure to win. A soldier, not knowing what harm he did, delivered a message to the King containing a strange word. This was the command word for the King to become aware of the geas upon the sword; he was to surrender to his enemies. His advisers watched in horror as he crossed the field to yield to the leader of the opposing host. His army began to lay down its arms, and trail, broken, from the field. Behind them, the King suddenly recovered his wits, and found himself ringed by spearmen. Only then did he realise what had befallen him.

Sword of Bast
Few intelligent magical items have a geas cast upon them, since the presence of the geas will be revealed instantly to the new owner through the rapport he will have with the item. However, the Sword of Bast is an example of a weapon with a 'voluntary' geas, that is to say, one in which the nature of the restriction or command is revealed to the new owner by the item itself, allowing him to decide whether to accept the item and the penalty attached, or to decline it.

The Sword of Bast informs the wielder: 'I am a simply enchanted sword dedicated to the service of Bast. If you use me, you will find a geas placed upon you, so that you may not kill or willingly harm any of the cat kind, nor suffer others to do so. Do you accept the geas?'

If the answer is 'yes', the sword will wait until the wielder has taken the effect of the geas and will then reveal itself in its full majesty — +2, +3 vs LE, +4 vs followers of Set. No cat will ever harm the wielder, and tame felines will be friendly. The sword hopes that the owner will become a follower of Bast, but will not use coercion. Instead, it will confer additional powers on those who pursue a vigorous campaign against Set's followers and minions. There is a 25% chance that it will allow the owner to attract a cat familiar; it will allow the wielder to Move Silently on a 99% chance; and will allow the wielder to speak all feline languages.

Venetia Lee

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PELINORE

LAW AND ORDER

The Administration of the Peace in the City League

by Paul Cockburn

Sooner or later in the life of every campaign there comes a time when even the most lawful of lawful good characters has a brush with the authorities. If your characters have chosen to live in the City League, you might as well resign yourself to the fact that it is more likely to be sooner. If you're a thief, or someone who enjoys a quiet night's mayhem in the local tavern, then it is likely to have happened already!

This article is for those DMs who, when the inevitable does finally happen, throw up their hands in horror. It is intended to provide a reference point from which the legal system of the League can be viewed. Whether you are introducing Pelinore as your campaign background or not, various individual components of the table can be ignored if the DM wishes to use another system; one could decide that the arrest of a suspect happened in an entirely different way, and then pick up the table from the trial onwards.

But before we get too involved in the mechanics, we had best take a hard look at the people and institutions responsible for the law in the City League.

Just like every other government function in the sprawling mass that is the City League, the administration of justice, law and order is governed by a bureaucracy of enormous size and complexity. It overlaps, confuses lines of authority, and provides endless anomalies and complexities to frustrate the ordinary citizen. Those who become embroiled in its mesh usually come to regret it.

Government in the City League is in the hands of the functionaries of the Katar, the hereditary Clerk-at-Arms, and ruler of the City. These operate from the environs of the Punctilio. The Katar has the constitutional power to codify commands through the process known as Enactments. These edicts serve to illustrate the essential policies of the Punctilio with regard to all matters: economics, foreign affairs.... and the law. Once an Enactment is passed, tradition decrees that it cannot be revoked, not even by another Enactment from a succeeding Katar. Instead, Enactments are refined and detailed by the By-Laws passed by the various lower tiers of government. In the course of the centuries that have passed since first the Katar's power was attained, literally hundreds of Enactments and many tens of thousands of By-laws have been passed. Each is administered by one of the Administration Departments at the Punctilio, which means that the civil service in the City League has grown to enormous size, with some departments operating staffs of many dozens, whilst others have a single Overseer.

The administration of this hopelessly unwieldy system is entrusted to a number of enforcement agencies of varying competence and legality. These patrol the City night and day, answering emergency calls, providing a degree of security, and causing the average citizen endless torment, since the old adage is quite true: "If a day passes when you didn't break a law in the League, then you must have been buried the day before."

Policing the League

The various agencies can be reduced to six definable groups, with different powers and responsibilities.

1. The District Militia: Most of the policing is done by the hard-pressed men-at-arms of the District Militia. Each administrative area of the League has its own judiciary, and runs a militia under the watch of the Inspectorium. The militia are funded in each locality by the imposition of a sales tax; but since tax evasion at this level is rife, the pay is poor, and the militia are corrupt. The quality of each District's force varies depending on the general lawfulness of the community, and the level of wealth. Their morale is low, and they are known to have taken the law into their own hands on many occasions.

2. The Private Condottas: Each of these bodies was raised originally under the authority of an ancient City By-Law that allows tax bills in excess of 5000gp to be paid for by providing an additional police patrol. Now they are virtually private armies, employed by the wealthiest eighty or ninety private citizens as bodyguards and extensions of their strength, since the Punctilio's bureaucratic department in charge of By-Law 1780f-1783 Administration has no time to conduct inspections. The courts have little time for them, and it is well known that they have a fierce hatred for the men of the Punctillan.

3. The Knights Ocular: This mysterious and powerful Order has existed for almost as long as the City, and is inextricably bound up in its affairs. It is an incredible organisation — its members are made up of an exotic mixture of classes, answerable to a Master who is said to be of semi-divine origin. Further, despite their power and seemingly evil outlook — as far as can be gathered from the few texts in the public domain concerning them — they are tied to the Punctilio and the person of the Katar in an inexplicable way. When last a coup was attempted in the City, all nine MU conspirators in the Plot of the Jade Serpent — Wizards of 10th-15th level all — were dead within two hours.

No-one understands the motives of the Knights Ocular, but it is widely believed that the secret of their power must be worth a fortune of unbelievable size.

They operate in an unusual way. Most of the members patrol the City, looking for all the world like ordinary citizens, observing and reporting. They never ignore any crime, preferring to report the miscreant to the Punctillan, and they have instant access to the Court of Ten Thousand Ravens. The party that finds itself involved with the Order of the Knights Ocular will be very sorry indeed.

4. The Punctillan: This is the direct arm of the Katar and the Punctilio, but one kept restricted after two past attempts at seizing power. Undoubtedly, they would have been abolished altogether if the Katar had been able to dispense with their services. Instead they are now led by a high-ranking cavalier who has sworn irrevocable fealty to the Katar, and are watched over by the Committee of Administration, the inner government cabinet. Such is the wealth of the City, that the Punctillan are more lavishly equipped than the armies of some Kingdoms.

5. Guild Militia: Numerous guilds within the City operate militia for entirely selfish reasons. Some, like the Mercantile Guild, have guards at major sites of commerce. Others, like the militia of the Guild of Thieves, ensure that all activities that fall within its 'jurisdiction' are controlled by the Guild. Some are vast — the Guild of Banks and Moneychangers Major employ over 1000 men and women — but most have smaller establishments. Everyone knows the Guild Militia to be bully boys, uninterested in the good of ordinary citizens. Very often, the patrol will handle

the situation themselves, without recourse to the niceties of trials. On other occasions they will make use of ad-hoc kangeroo courts at the Guild headquarters. Here, the verdict is always guilty, and the defendant always gives his worldly goods away to the court officials.

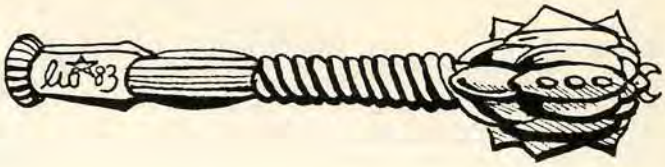
6. Religious Orders: Five religious orders are large enough and have enough influence to operate independent judiciaries and police. Under the provisions of Enactment IV, these are empowered to prosecute cases of blasphemy. No By-Laws have ever managed to tie down exactly what constitutes blasphemous behaviour, so the orders tend to do as they wish, arresting whomever they fancy, and charging them with blasphemy no matter what the offence actually was. Religious wars and pogroms tend to be fought out in this way, with mass trials and bloody reprisals, until such time as the Katar or the Knights Ocular step in....

The Courts

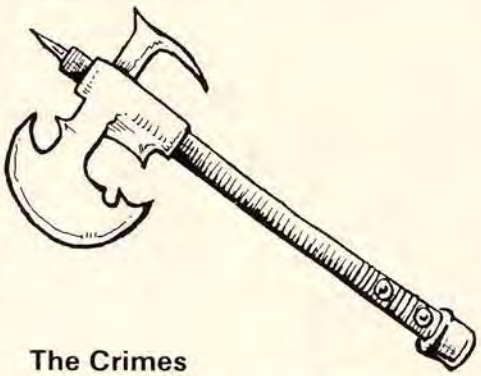
Excluding the ad-hoc courts of the various guilds, and other disciplinary bodies within organisations, there are three main judiciaries within the City League:

1. Mayorial District Courts: Each administrative district of the City controls several courthouses, set up in buildings known collectively as the Athya. Nominally separate, the Mayorial Courts are served by a judiciary appointed by the Minister of Justice on the Katar's Committee of Administration, and the sinister Redemptor Committee of the Court of Ten Thousand Ravens. They are grossly overworked, poorly supervised, and consequently corrupt. Judges can be bribed to alter the verdict or the sentence; clerks can be bribed to bring forward — or delay! — the hearing of cases; even the Prosecutor-General's office, the court arm of the Punctillan, is open to influence. In the meantime, the defendant usually languishes in a district guardhouse. The Mayorial courts have the authority to try any case, but usually hand cases of a capital nature over to the Court of Ten Thousand Ravens. The preliminary hearing normally then only establishes guilt or innocence, passing sentencing over to the superior court. This tends to lead to a duplicate trial, as the judges there much prefer to conduct the whole case!

2. The Court of Ten Thousand Ravens: Below the Punctilio, there stands a vast marble building, three storeys high, covered in the excreta of a vast host of huge black ravens, who circle the towers and central dome. In times past, this building was the central temple of the Church of Xnath-pi-Xnath. This barbaric religion and its chief deity, a dark bird-god, vanished over three centuries ago, at which time the Temple was taken over by the Katar. From that point on, the Temple of Ten Thousand Ravens was the seat of the supreme judiciary in the City League, and the building became known as the Court of Ten Thousand Ravens — the two names are virtually interchangeable (the further away you travel from the City League, the more likely it is that the number of ravens will have changed as well!). The Temple is the only civil court with the power to administer death sentences, and a fair few of these have been handed out over the years. It is popularly believed that the eponymous ten thousand ravens of the Temple contain the souls of all the departed criminals. Cynics have been heard to observe that the bloated birds must have about two or three hundred souls each.



3. The Religious Order Judiciaries: The only other legally constituted courts in the City are the five run by the largest religious groupings within the locality. As previously observed, these are only entitled to try cases of blasphemy. The most infamous of these, the Temple Without Doors, gets through about 200 cases a week on the strength of this, seizing those who have been caught stealing, engaged in violence — anything that can be shown to be against the teaching of the relevant deity, and thereby blasphemous. Sentences are harsh and carried out instantly. At the Temple Without Doors, victims are lead up a spiral staircase within the central crystal shaft, to be thrown off an open platform into a closed courtyard....



The Crimes

Long ago, a Katar by the name of Morgannis IV Lawgiver took it upon himself to codify the legal system of the City League. Through his famous Enactment CCCII, Morgannis, who was by preference a fisherman, and quite a good one at that, invented a system that was ludicrously simple. Over the intervening years, lawyers, judges, politicians and other Katars added to the system by a seemingly endless promulgation of By-Laws and other statutes, but the Enactment remains intact in essence. Basically, there are only ten crimes on the statute book, listed on the table on page 12 in order of seriousness. All defendants are brought to trial facing one of these charges, usually with a codicil describing which of the thirty thousand By-laws have been particularly violated. Thus, there are no crimes labelled embezzlement, fraud, tax evasion or blackmail; these are all covered by one of the three 'robbery' categories. Also, there are no 'attempted' crimes, or conspiracy charges: the Enactment says that in the eyes of the Law, if you were going to do it — you did it!

Most of the crimes are self-explanatory. Historically, Treason has only ever been brought against those who have been directly sought to subvert the power of the Katar, as in the celebrated attempts by the Punctillan to replace him with a military dictatorship. The three 'robbery' categories are differentiated solely by the amount of money involved. Affray is a catch-all for all the minor charges — drunkenness, fighting, creating a disturbance, traffic offences — that go to make up 90% of all legal cases. The unique category is the quite serious crime of Failing to Observe a Festival. According to the old, and recently superceded, League Calendar, 50 of the 350 days in the Old Year were designated Festival Days, on which it was forbidden to trade or to engage in any activity involving the passing of coin or promissary notes; or to hold assemblies of more than 30 people. The calendar may have changed, but the Festivals remain, imposed at a few days notice by the arbitrary and hopelessly inefficient Enactment XXVII Administration Department. The number of cases brought against this charge has dropped considerably over the last few years, as the Court of Ten Thousand Ravens ruled that the process adopted by the Department is illegal under the Restriction of Trade By-laws 3779-89g. The whole matter is fascinating to lawyers, but utterly frustrating to those individuals hauled up by the Punctillan or the Religious Orders, who can find themselves involved in legal proceedings for anything between 2 and 40 years!

The Law

Overleaf you will find a chart that traces the legal process through from getting caught to hearing the sentence. It is easy to follow, and allows the DM to get through cases fairly quickly where this is desired. Otherwise, the result can be 'predicted' using this method, and the DM can then alter the proceedings as the characters get involved.

Getting Spotted — Base Chance 20%

Use the Base Chance and the following suggestions to created a modified chance of attracting unwanted attention whenever a character is engaged in illegal behaviour.

Time/Weather Modifiers:		Place Modifiers:		Activity Modifiers:	
Broad daylight	+10%	Dark alley	-35%	Noisy fight	+40%
Just before dawn	-15%	Busy thoroughfare	+15%	Opportunist theft	-20%
Rainy Day	-5%	Crowded Market	-10%	Clumsy burglary	+20%

DM should decide whether crime has been spotted by patrol (10%) or other person (90%). If latter, roll on Time to Arrive column of **Getting Busted** table (and note that the person could act as a witness during the trial). In both cases determine what patrol is involved on **Getting Busted** table. If the criminals have fled by the time the patrol arrives, consult the Chance/Time to Track Down column of the **Getting Busted** table.

The Rap

DM should ensure that the crime is tried by the correct court, and prosecuted by the correct authority

Crime[1]	Punishment Modifier	Prosecutors	Court
Treason	250	Punc, KO	2
Murder	100 (+ victim's level x5)	Dist, PC, Punc, KO	1,2
Robbery (5,000gp or more)	80 (+ victim's level x2)	PC, GM, Punc, KO	1,2
Arson	75	Dist, PC, GM, Punc, KO	1,2
Theft (40-4999gp)	50 (+ victim's level x1)	Dist, PC, GM	1,2
Blasphemy	50	RO, KO	3
Assault	40 (+ victim's level x3)	Dist, PC, GM, Punc	1
Failure to Observe Festival	30	Punc, RO	2
Pilfering (39gp or less)	25	Dist, Punc	1
Affray	15	Dist, PC	1

Notes: [1] Crimes tried in the Mayorial courts may be handed up to the Court of Ten Thousand Ravens where there is a possibility of a death sentence. The defendant will then be retried.

Before The Beak

The DM should determine the delay before the trial. The defendant may hire an advocate. The trial's delay and the eventual verdict/sentence may be altered by bribes.

The normal delay before the trial comes to court is d100 days in the Mayorial Courts, 2d20 days at the Court of Ten Thousand Ravens and d6-1 days at the Religious Courts. This time may either be shortened or lengthened by the use of bribes — see **Greasing the Palm**.

Advocates: Advocates cost 5gp per level (max 9) and 5gp per charisma point. Costs are cumulative, ie a 3rd level lawyer costs 5gp for the first level, 10gp for the second and 15gp for the third — total 30gp. A level 9, 18 charisma advocate would cost 1080gp.

The lawyer's level and charisma replace the defendant's in calculating the Innocence Modifier.

Guilt Modifiers
- Victim's Modifier (if applicable — see **The Rap**)
- Court Modifier: Mayorial 50, Ravens 60, Religious 75
- Prosecution Modifier: Dist 50, PC 40, GM 30, Punc 60, RO 50, KO 70
- Evidence Modifier: Confession 80, Caught in act 40, Witnessed 20, Circumstantial 10
- Form Modifier
  - Each previous conviction 10
  - Each previous Not Proven 5

Innocence Modifiers
- Defendant/Lawyer Level
  - 2x level
- Defendant/Lawyer Charisma
  - 2x charisma
- Form Modifier
  - No previous convictions 30

Perform the calculation (Guilt Modifiers - Innocence Modifiers). Result is the percentage chance of being found guilty — see **Fair Cop**.

Note: Even if the calculation leads to a result in excess of 100 or less than 0, the DM should still make the percentile roll, since there are occasional travesties of justice — see **Fair Cop**.

Fair Cop

Once the calculation Guilt Modifier - Innocence Modifier has yielded a result, and any bribes have been considered, the result will be the Verdict Roll Required. The Verdict Roll is the percentage chance of the defendant being found guilty. The DM should make the roll, and inform the defendant of the resulting verdict. If the Verdict Roll is 0-3% above or below the Required total for Guilt, the verdict will be Not Proven.

Regardless of the Verdict Roll Required, a Roll of 01-04% is always guilty (even if bribes have been offered), a Roll of 05-06% is always Not Proven, and a roll of 96-00% is always Innocent.

The Not Proven is a modified guilty verdict by which the Court acknowledges that, despite the verdict, the evidence against the defendant was not quite perfect. Thus, the defendant goes free, but a note of the verdict is retained by the Court which will influence any future trials — see **Before The Beak** and **Going Down**.

Example: A defendant ends up with a Verdict Roll Required of 55%, modified to 40% by bribes. On a Roll of 01-04 she will be guilty, and would have been found so even if she had the alibi that she was already in jail at the time; 05-06 would be Not Proven; 07-36 would be Guilty (the bribe wasn't enough!); 37-43 Not Proven; 44-95 Innocent (and if the Roll was 44-58% the bribe will have been worth every cp); 96-00 Innocent, and she would have been Innocent on this roll if she had confessed and produced the missing jewels in the courtroom....

Going Down

Bribes may influence the sentence

Advocates may be retained at no additional cost if they were at the hearing

Advocates: The advocates level and charisma replace the defendant's in calculating the Mitigation Modifier.

Sentence Modifiers
- Punishment Modifier (see **The Rap**)
- Victim Modifier (if applicable — see **The Rap**)
- Court Modifier: Mayorial 0, Ravens 50, Religious 10
- Prosecution Modifier: Dist 0, PC 5, GM 10, Punc 20, RO 10, KO 0
- Form Modifier
  - Each Previous Guilty 30
  - Each Previous Not Proven 15
- Bribe Modifier
  - If bribe offered but still found guilty 30

Mitigation Modifiers
- Defendant/Lawyer Level
  - 3x level
- Defendant/Lawyer Charisma
  - 3x charisma

Perform calculation Sentence Modifiers - Mitigation Modifiers. Result is the Penalty Modifier — see **Society's To Blame**.

Getting Busted

If a patrol is called, roll percentile dice to determine which kind:

%	Type; composition	Morale	Chance/ Time To Track[4] (%/days)	Time to arrive (mins)[5]
01-40	District Militia (Dist); F2, d4+2 F1s	Low	10/d100	d12
41-60	Private Condottas (PC); F3, d4-1 F2s, d4 F1s	Average	15/2d100	d20
61-76	Guild Militia (GM); d4+1 F1-4[1]	varies[3]	12/2d100	d6[6]
77-86	Punctillan (Punc); F3, F2, d4+1 F1s	Good	25/2d20	2d8
87-98	Religious Orders (RO); C3, d6 C1s	Good	40/d4	2d20
99-00	Knights Ocular (KO); T1-6 *or* F1-6[2]	V Good	60/d4	d4

DM should alter the composition of patrols at times of civic unrest, in areas with high crime rates, etc. Should reinforcements be required, the DM should allow the first patrol to send for them enough to handle the situation will arrive in d100 minutes.

Notes: [1] Certain guilds — Thieves for example — will use other classes.
[2] In the Advanced game these should be Cavaliers or Assassins.
[3] Morale of militias from richer guilds is higher than for smaller ones.
[4] The DM should make alterations to both chance and time to allow for the evidence the perpetrators might leave behind. Note that the Private Condottas and the Guild Militia will not track down anyone who has not commited an offence directly against their interests.
[5] At night, all times should be doubled.
[6] Guild Militia will not answer general distress calls; encounter should be rerolled.

Police Brutality

Roll precentile die to discover the patrol's reactions

Patrol	Rough Justice	Law/Own Hands	Open to Bribes[1]	Arrest & Charge[2]	Court
Dist	01-10	11-15	16-35	36-00	1
PC	01-12	13-22	23-27	28-00	1,2[4]
GM	01-25	26-34	35-45	46-00	1[5]
Punc	01-05	06-09	10-12	13-00	1,2[4]
RO	01-12	13-20	—	21-00	3
KO	01	—	02	03-00[3]	2

Notes [1] A bribe of 100gp x patrol leader's level will ensure patrol leaves character(s) alone — for now. If no bribe offered, treat as Arrest & Charge.
[2] Captive will be taken to gaol. If arresting patrol has no jurisdiction, they will hand over to someone who has. Check Court column to see which court trial will be heard in.
[3] The Knights Ocular are unlikely to make the arrest themselves, but will call in the Punctillan to do so. They will ensure that no escape is possible, and will be the prosecutors when the case is heard.
[4] Serious crimes may be taken directly to the Court of Ten Thousand Ravens.
[5] Guild Militia are 60% likely to take the criminal before an ad-hoc court. Defendant will be found guilty. DM should consider just what the punishment might be, considering the Guild concerned. Patrols indulging in Rough Justice will hand out an on-the-spot beating, or a 'fine' or somesuch. Patrols taking the Law into their Own Hands will severely assault thieves, and may attempt to lynch murderers or arsonists. Only the arrival of a more disciplined patrol will halt this process.

Greasing The Palm

Bribes may alter the time the case takes to get to court, the verdict, and the eventual sentence

Bribes may be offered to corrupt court officials. The costs in each of the courts is outlined below.

	Court	Advance/Delay Trial (per day)[1]	Alter Verdict (per point)[2]	Alter Sentence (per point)[3]
1	Mayorial	1d4gp	10gp	5gp
2	Ravens	10gp	50gp	50gp
3	Religious	100gp	100gp	150gp

Notes: [1] The defendant should be informed of the date of his trial, although in the case of the Mayorial Courts this may not be 100% accurate. The bribe may then be offered at any time from the datt informed — even if only approximately — of the roll he will have to make to be found Innocent **before that roll is made**. The costs outlined are for each point reduction in the required Verdict Roll. It is not possible to offer a bribe that guarantees guilt or innocence — see **Fair Cop**. If a bribe is offered, but the defendant is still found guilty, then 30 should be added to the Penalty Modifier when sentence is decided. See **Society's To Blame**.
[3] See **Going Down** and **Society's To Blame**. The DM should inform the defendant of the range of sentences available to the Court, **before one has been selected**. The costs in the table above are to reduce the Penalty Modifier by 1 point.
Note: There is nothing to stop bribes being offered to make it more likely that someone will be found guilty, or given a higher punishment. The table above works both ways.

Society's To Blame

Compare the Penalty Modifier to the Possible Sentences

Bribes may alter the final sentence

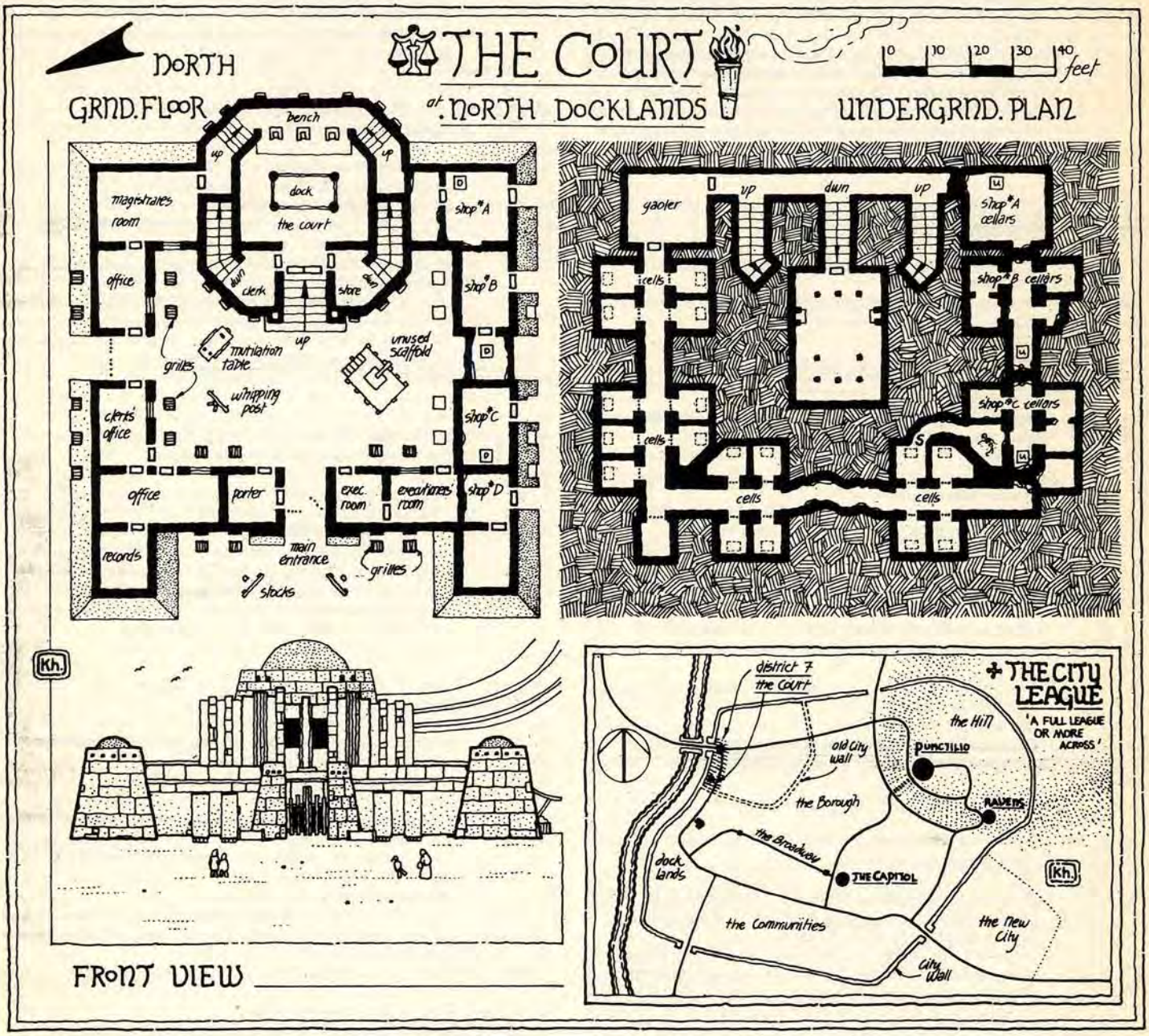
The DM should take the Penalty Modifier and compare it to the ranges of each sentence listed below. If the Modifier falls within the range, the DM should make a note, compiling a list containing 1-6 possible sentences. The actual sentence may then be selected randomly, or chosen by the DM.

Penalty Modifier	Punishment
less than +10	Warning[1]
-10 — +20	Fine 1gp x defendant's level[2]
+10 — +20	Fine 30gp x defendant's level[2]
+25 — +60	Fine 250gp x defendant's level[2]
0 — +50	Dismemberment (loss of fingers, eyes, etc)[3]
+40 — +200	Banishment[4]
+50 or more	Death
-10 — +25	Jail 1d4 months[5]
+15 — +35	Jail 2d6 months[5]
+25 — +60	Jail 2d12 months[5]
+35 — +80	Jail d12 years[5]
+50 — +150	Jail 2d20 years[5]
+80 — +200	Life Imprisonment[5]
+100 — +200	Slavery[6]

Notes: [1] Although the defendant goes free, the conviction is kept on record.
[2] If the defendant cannot or will not pay, add 10 to the Penalty Modifier and compile a new list, ignoring Fine results.
[3] The disfigurement should be appropriate to the crime — loss of fingers for theft, loss of ears for spying. Adultery is not a crime in the City League.
[4] If the convicted felon is ever found within the City League again, the case will be reheard. The +10 Form Modifier will apply to **The Hearing**. If the defendant is re-convicted, the DM should add 50 to the Penalty Modifier in addition to the +30 Form Modifier — see **Going Down**.
[5] There is no such things as remission in the City League.
[6] Since slavery is discouraged in the City by a high tax on owners, the convict will be transported via the small coastal port of Borth to the Mercantile Tradecities of Xir, to be sold at public auction.

PELINORE

NORTH DOCKLANDS



15 N DOCKLANDS (No 7) COURT

In a sunny spot on a popular promenade alongside the docks stands a typical district courthouse. This once grand building has seen better days for it is slipping slowly into disrepair and decay and now its walls bear the graffiti of countless generations. One wing has been sold off to private entrepreneurs and now houses a short row of shops (including 16 and 17). The trade of the courthouse goes on undisturbed; its inner courtyard periodically thronged with people who willingly pay to watch whippings, executions, dismemberments and worse; its officers and guards getting rapidly fat on the regular (and expected) bribes.

Prisoners are thrown into their underground cells through grilles in the pavement. These grilles allow locals to abuse the inmates, or shower them with filth. They also give rise to the possibility of hair-raising escapes....

The Organising Magistrate (**15a**) selects local notables to sit with him in judgement. The officers and guards of the court are normal men and women, neither more nor less greedy than usual, although, inevitably, there is one rotten apple in the barrel — Petronna Goldenhair (**15e**).

15a **Gilas Widgery**; M; Fr7; L/LN; hp 22/29; AC 9/10; No weapon

H
S 13 ☐ *Grey haired, tall, grey and black robes, red hood*
I 12 ☐ *Organising Magistrate*
W 10 ☐ *Dignified, concerned, not very wise, complete snob*
D 11 ☐ *On nodding terms with many local dignitaries, but no*
C 8 *friends; scrupulous in his application of the court rules, but*
Ch 15 *not averse to amassing a little wealth.*

15b **Mailai Frith-Lorendar**; F; Fr3; L/LN; hp 13/15; AC7/8; **Dagger of Concealment +2**

H
S 13 ☐ *Elegant, wears blue and silver suit and gold ring which is a* ***Dagger of Concealment*** *+2 (a ring which acts as a* ***ring of protection*** *+2 and can be turned into a* ***dagger*** *+2, used*
I 16 *and turned back again all in one round – see module X8)*
W 13 ☐ *Clerk*
D 12 ☐ *Clever, ambitious, social climber, career civil servant*
C 10 ☐ *Of modest background, Mailai scorned adventuring for a*
Ch 12 *life of anticipated wealth as a civil servant. She knows you have to start at the bottom, what she doesn't know is that she's probably stuck here for life; she got the* ***Dagger of Concealment*** *from an adventurer she met one evening*

15c **'Old' Daliel**; M; Fr3; L/LG; hp 12/14; AC 9/10; No weapon

G
S 9 ☐ *Ancient, scruffy, brown jerkin and filthy yellow hose*
I 15 ☐ *Assistant clerk*
W 14 ☐ *Intelligent, hard working, kindly, far too honest for his own*
D 9 *good*
C 8 ☐ *A loner*
Ch 5

15d **Krad Earthdelver**; M; Dw6/F6; N/NG; hp 40/46; AC 5; Battle axe, short sword or mace

Dw
S 17 ☐ *Shiny chain shirt, steel helmet, padded leggings with*
I 9 *leather cross-garters*
W 12 ☐ *Head jailor*
D 11 ☐ *Bluff, gruff, shrewd, businesslike*
C 12 ☐ *Knows Burbury Flataxe (**5d**) and doesn't much like him*
Ch 10

15e **Petronna Goldenhair**; F; F5; C/CE; hp 40/52; AC 7/8; Dagger, whip, blackjack, torture instruments

H
S 16 ☐ *Black leather jerkin and leggings, hideous black leather*
I 11 *skull cap and mask*
W 13 ☐ *Assistant jailor and torturer*
D 12 ☐ *Calm, polite, well-spoken and very, very nasty*
C 17 ☐ *An adventuress, not a League native*
Ch 16

15f **Tiblin ana-Ristorin**; M; Th6; N/NE; hp 24/27; AC 3/-3; Concealed dagger, **staff +3**

H/½
S 12 ☐ *Ragged grey and brown robes, leather headband (in AD&D*
I 15 *game – **bracers of defence AC4**), **ring of protection +3***
W 12 ☐ *Stick salesman (sharper/filcher)*
D 18 ☐ *Feigns stupid, benign oaf; actually ruthless and intelligent*
C 14 ☐ *Member of the local thief's guild; he wanders around in the*
Ch 14 *vicinity of the court selling sharp sticks to passers-by so they can prod the prisoners through the grilles; this is a cover for his true trade – pick-pocket and mugger.*

15g **The Chastiser**. No details are given about this creature of mystery. The Chastiser appears hooded when called, to perform such corporal punishments as are demanded by the court.

Also working in the Courthouse are 6 minor clerks and 12 guards. The clerks will be met drifting about, apparently trying to kill time. The guards are all F2, hp 12/15 and they will be found chatting with one another around the courtyard. The guards are well trained, despite their appearance, and will act efficiently and quickly when called upon by either Krandle or Petronna. At night the guards take turns to patrol in pairs. Petronna has the disconcerting habit of roaming abroad at night, looking for 'fun'.

THE MAGISTRATES

In order to enliven proceedings at the court the DM may choose to have one or more of the following worthies sit for the trial of the PCs involved; it won't be long before their names are feared (or loved) throughout your campaign!

15h **Estorillian**; M; Fr7; L/LN; hp 18/24; AC 9/10; Staff-mace

E
S 12 ☐ *Tall, equine, elegant, navy blue robes trimmed with*
I 11 *hoar-fox*
W 13 ☐ *Silver-smith*
D 8 ☐ *Arrogant, supercilious, coward*
C 9 ☐ *Well-known and hated local-boy-made-good, now lives*
Ch 11 *out of the area but likes to return periodically to sneer and hand down vicious sentences; he always allows elves a +50 Mitigation Modifier; loves to be 'lenient' by 'reducing' sentences to dismemberment*

15i **Maker Redbeam**; M; Fr3; N/NG; hp 11/14; AC 7/8; Knobbed stick

G
S 8 ☐ *Walks round looking like a court-jester with multicoloured*
I 15 *padded jacket, hose and huge codpiece*
W 14 ☐ *Cooper (and local guild-officer)*
D 9 ☐ *Fire-brand, unbribable, hates authority, inferiority com-*
C 7 *plex, swears he isn't a gnome*
Ch 10 ☐ *Very well known locally and largely liked despite his eccentric habits; when sitting at the bench he 'rids the town of undesirables' by banishing or selling into slavery anyone he finds guilty of anything; he completely ignores all level or charisma modifiers when coming to his decision and woe-betide any gnomes that appear before him!*

15j **Mareta the Wise**; F; C4; L/LG; hp 14/22; AC 3; Huge, strengthened, religious staff-mace

H
S 18^{51} ☐ *Squat, powerful, wears breastplate over rough green habit*
I 10 ☐ *Vicar/curate of a L/LG church*
W 14 ☐ *Honest, disciplinarian, loud, kindly*
D 9 ☐ *Runs a tight little church nearby (one of the few never to*
C 10 *have been raided by the local thieves guild); applies the*
Ch 7 *laws fairly and squarely but considers those who make generous payments to her church or, even better, convert on the spot, to have redeemed themselves*

15k **Lirau the Red**; F; F6; L/NG; hp 36/48; AC4; **Longsword +3** and dagger

H
S 17 ☐ *Medium build, head held high, red hair, wears velvet dress*
I 11 *which conceals chain mail shirt*
W 10 ☐ *Retired adventuress now living off her finds*
D 15 ☐ *Shrewd, rough-and-ready, but soft on plausible rogues*
C 12 ☐ *Lil returned from her adventures to this, the place of her*
Ch 15 *birth, some years ago with a strong reputation for valour. She knows practically everyone locally, but has kept particular acquaintance with many adventurers, so that her house sees the comings and goings of strange people at all hours of the day and night. She is known as the 'adventurers friend' when sitting in justice, as she usually gives them the benefit of the doubt.*

16 GEMCUTTER

In part of the wing now let out as shops, **Shoril the Gemcutter (16a)** now plys his trade. He is Dw4/F4 hp 20/25 and a dwarf. His brother, Dalin (**14f**) is a member of staff in the Cock o' th' Walk tavern (**14**). Adventurers can have rough gems improved in value here. Shoril's payment will be 20% of the improvement.

17 COBBLER

Next to Shoril's is this homely cobblers run by **Goldy** and **Haffo Brushfoot (17a & b)** who are the parents of Bando Brushfoot (**14h**) — a thief who works around Gibbet Lane and The Walk (**14**).

When Constabulary Duty's To Be Done....

....a patroller's lot is not an 'appy one; but nothing like as un-happy as that of the miscreant. Listed below are some patrols to help the DM persecute 'innocent' parties. Naturally if the DM feels the characteristics ascribed to the leader of one of the patrols would fit another, they can be changed round. Each patrol is suitable for a campaign of modest level; as always in the City League the DM should increase the level, hit points and numbers if required by the campaign.

District Militia Leader

18a **'Corporal' Thirel**; M; F2; N/LN; hp 14/18; AC 6/7; Flail

H
S 15 ☐ *Short and tubby, ring-studded leathers, red bandana*
I 9 ☐ *Leading militiaman, warrior*
W 9 ☐ *Basically honest, fearful of higher authority, cocky, bully*
D 10 ☐ *Well-known locally and mostly ignored, can often be found*
C 12 *in inns bragging loudly about his onerous duties*
Ch 8

The group Thirel leads is made up of 6 first level fighters (all hp 6/7) who jeer and laugh loudly at Thirel's comments; as a group they can't wait for someone to 'resist arrest', and their victims seem to have the unfortunate habit of continually 'falling down the cell steps, m'lud'.

Private Condotta Leader

18b **Borgrim Orceater**; M; F3; N/NE; hp 18/21; AC 2; Longsword and dagger

H
S 15 ☐ *Big, burly, wears breastplate over leather jerkin*
I 11 ☐ *Leader of his condotta, swordmaster/swordsman*
W 8 ☐ *Vicious, nasty, effective, coward*
D 15 ☐ *Sucks up to anyone more powerful than he is, universally*
C 12 *despised*
Ch 9

His band is made up from 3 second level fighters (hp 9/11) and 4 first level fighters (hp 4/6) and it is their mood and courage that Borgrim draws upon. They are volatile and prone to handing out beatings whenever they feel they can get away with it. Borgrim on his own is not quite so tough – if an orc said 'boo!' to him he'd probably faint.

Punctillan Leader

18c **Amir Schezhuan XIV**; M; F3; L/LN; hp 18/21; AC 3; Spear and scimitar

H/H
S 14 ☐ *Neatly attired in chain mail, dark with neat beard*
I 9 ☐ *Amir (leader) of his squad, swordmaster/swordsman*
W 14 ☐ *Career officer, fair but rough when needed, cool, efficient*
D 16 ☐ *Unknown locally, popular with his fellow officers*
C 12
Ch 16

His squad of 6 second level fighters (hp 14/17) is well trained and obedient, although they will 'discipline' the truculent or unruly. When Schezhuan says 'come quietly and you won't get hurt', he means it.

Knights Ocular

This group will be tall and shrouded, revealing little of sex or race, and will speak little and act as if each knows what all are thinking. It will be made up of fighters, cavaliers, assassins and other classes as necessary and in apparent contradiction of what might be expected. Often the initial encounter will be with a solitary individual, who will only be visible to the party if in an open, well-lit area, or if specifically and carefully searched out. Nine times out of ten, the party will never know that they were being observed by a member of the Knights. But if they see adventurers commit an offence, or if the Knights have some reason to wish ill on an individual or group, they will almost always muster enough firepower (both magical and non-magical) to overcome any party of mere adventurers, no matter what their level — it's as if they have some uncanny way of knowing exactly what to expect in advance. Their behaviour is utterly ruthless, though rigidly lawful.

Guild Militia Leader

18d **Rontollo**; (most guilds) M; F4 C/CN; hp 30/37; AC 6/7; (thieves' guild) M; T4; C/CN; hp 16/24; AC 7/8; Long sword and dagger

H
S 13 ☐ *Ordinary looking, with large scar on forehead, studded*
I 8 *leather or leather armour*
W 9 ☐ *Guild militiaman*
D 10 ☐ *Serious, fanatically loyal to the guild, uncompromising*
C 11 ☐ *Stranger from across the seas but popular with his men*
Ch 12

The guild militiamen are mostly loyal mercenaries who are ready (and often encouraged) to take the law into their own hands whenever necessary. Justice to them is maintaining the honour of the guild.

Religious Order's Leader

18e **Impir Rokko**; M; C3; C/CN; hp 16/21; AC 3; Mace

H
S 12 ☐ *Tall, skinny, clerical robes over breast-plate*
I 12 ☐ *Priest*
W 16 ☐ *Arrogant, raving, despotic, fanatic*
D 9 ☐ *Who'd admit to knowing him?*
C 8
Ch 7

His band of 6 first level clerics (hp 5/7) is scarcely less chaotic than he is and are most enthusiastic in their duties. His only goal is religious 'purity' – and a party's best means of escape is to grovel.

Plotlines

1 One of the chief weaknesses of all mighty bureaucracies is the absolute belief that 'if it's in the files then it must be true!'. Imagine what havoc, what carriages, or miscarriages, of justice could be perpetrated by someone bold enough to break into a repository of such files and leave a suitably forged document. There is such a repository in this Courthouse; a Courthouse where friends of daring adventurers might face trial....

2 There come occasions in the lives of most mortals when a complete answer to life's problems can be found in the granting of the wish 'if only I could disappear'. It is not given to everyone to have the wealth to get into such trouble and then get out of it. But what better way for a hunted young noble to escape than to persuade a band of trusty adventurers to help him organise a trial, and a fake execution. The problems would be many — who is the executioner and how is he to be bought, who can be trusted to 'bear' the body away, how to keep Petronna Goldenhair from delivering a messy coup-de-grace — but the rewards would be great.

3 It is not always the innocent who suffer miscarriages of justice. What if a guilty man is acquitted? Is it not possible that the outraged neighbours and friends of the bereaved would demand retribution, and failing to get the man retried would buy the services of outlanders to arrange false evidence of a new crime so damning that real justice could not fail to be done in the end....

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

ERRATUM

By the powers invested in me by the Honourable Guild of Heralds I hereby give warning that Olaf Typesetter **late** *of Gibbet Street confessed to undervaluing citizens of this, the City League before he died. Know then, o princes, that the correct hit die value for FREEMEN and FREEWOMAN (***IMAGINE magazine** *#17, page 12) should be d4 in the Basic game and d6 in Advanced. Take heed and adjust your Heraldic Tomes accordingly.*

ADDENDUM

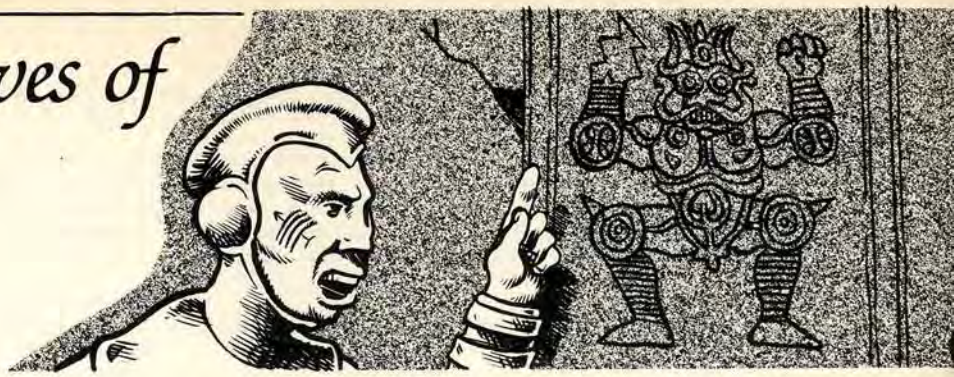
By the powers invested in me by the Honourable Guild of Heralds I further give warning that the confusion of genders shall hereby cease **whereby** *all catalogued characters of this, our League of Cities, shall have their gender included in their stats immediately after their name, and that* **furthermore** *there shall cease to be repetition of the said stats where the figures for Basic and Advanced are the same.*

COMMUNICATUM

By the powers invested in me by the Honourable Guild of Heralds I warn you that ignorance of our Fair Countie of Cerwyn (pronounced Ker-oo-un by you, shorty) that surrounds this city shall be deemed **illegal** *under By-Law 1877 of Enactment XXVIII following the publication of much encyclopaedic information on that place in one of our most noble Heraldic Tomes known as* **IMAGINE magazine Special Edition**, *due out later this month!*

Felix Pursuivant
First Assistant to the Junior Herald

The Private Lives of NPCs



by Katino

PART II

In IMAGINE™ magazine #11, *Katino*'s article, the first in this series, discussed how one might make NPCs in a campaign more believable. This month, he develops this theme...

Before starting on the main point of this article, may I firstly pay my thanks to Mr Roger Musson (of *Stirge Corner* fame) for his kind comments in #13 and also to the writers of the letters received by the editor. It is gratifying to find like-minded souls, wherever one encounters them.

I would also ask Mr Musson's forgiveness for borrowing an idea of his which I thought might make a good adventure and which beautifully illustrates the point we are collectively making. In his article, he mentions the Guilty Fighter attempting to atone for a past crime. As we have a suitable NPC, let's start from there and cover the first few stages in designing an adventure with interesting encounters and a developing story-line, incorporating the principles talked about previously.

The town I have chosen as our first setting is called Lantero. To the North is the border between our native Arthem and the warlike and troublesome peoples of Thorea. East and West of the town are the eaves of the Great Forests and to the South lie the Grasslands, a relatively peaceful, open region on rolling hills and plains. It is important to establish the setting for each 'scene' and a general background for any adventure, not just from the player interest point of view, but also because it makes the job of description far easier for the GM to handle, and improvisation, where needed, will sound more believable when based on a working knowledge of the area. Of course, a lot more information than this is needed, but I am sure you get the point.

Having decided where, the next question is when. While some sort of calendar is sometimes needed, this is not always relevant, especially if you are running a series of disconnected adventures, as I do. However, some sort of 'when' would be useful. Assume that the Thoreans and Arthemians are almost constantly in a state of war, interspersed with uneasy truces of varying length. We are taking up our story during one such truce which has now lasted for 3 years, about average.

Now, to business. Our story will revolve around Khalin (pronounced *Kar-Leen*), who was born and raised in Lantero with his younger brother Beran. As children, Khalin and his brother used to play in the fields, streams and swamps surrounding the small town. On one occasion, they ventured into the great forest to the East, strictly against their parents' orders. There they encountered a fearful monster which attacked them. Khalin tried to defend them both with his pitifully small hunters' knife but was smashed to the ground, unconscious, by the creature's first blow. When he awoke, the creature and his brother had disappeared. He ran home and told his parents who were sympathetic at first but who, in time, came to grieve mightily for their lost son. Although no vocal accusation was ever made against him, Khalin eventually convinced himself that he had been responsible for his brother's death.

On his conscription to the Arthemian army, he went to fight the Thoreans and acquitted himself with great honour against the orcs, trolls and other fell creatures used by the armies of the North. Some said he was foolhardy and reckless in taking so many risks in battle. Almost as if he had a death wish ...

At the age of 26, Khalin returned to Lantero, a seasoned, bronzed giant of a man who had seen enough killing and violence, and had done enough of it himself to last several lifetimes. His guilt had only been multiplied by the things he had seen and done. To the townspeople he was a hero. In his own eyes, he was already many times damned. He settled to a quiet, solitary life as a farmer, becoming nicknamed the Gentle Giant.

Meanwhile, Beran had experienced a much harsher education. Losing his right hand to the creature, he stumbled away not knowing how he escaped those deadly jaws. But escape he did, only to be captured by marauding orcs who used a black potion to stem his wounds and carried him off with them back to Thorea. There he was sold as a slave to a fat, wealthy merchant who treated him harshly. He killed the merchant and then, stealing as much money and provisions as he could carry, set off into the Thorean wastelands where he became expert at the arts of survival and first discovered his ability to talk to and control some animals. During this exile, his fortunes changed when he rescued the priest, Drak'Nall from certain death at the hands of bandits.

Beran was, at first, confused by the reaction of the priest. Drak'Nall, seeing that Beran was possessed only of a left hand, said "So you are the one sent by the Lord Shamadir." Shamadir, the evil deity of the Thorean priest, had promised that a new leader would come, "with victory on the one hand" and Drak'Nall assumed Beran to be that leader. Now Beran, who had become sly, cunning and thoroughly evil through his own experiences, saw in this the chance to get even with the rest of the world. He therefore accompanied the priest to the Temple of Shamadir, hidden on a mountainside near the Paths of Dread, and underwent training in the black magical arts. He was an adept pupil, soon becoming more powerful than his teacher, whom he usurped as leader of the Temple priests. While not insane, his mind by now had certainly become twisted so that he hated fervently anything that was physically beautiful and he had no use for anything which required right handedness. Since Rollenor, the deity of Arthem, was known as the "right hand of Ashtara, the mighty universe", it followed that anything Arthemian was a valid target for his vengeance.

He too entered the war, although on a different front to his brother, and wreaked great havoc with his black magic and control of fell beasts among the enemy. So successful was he that he was given, by his king, the task of producing the perfect fighting beast, with which the accursed Arthemians could be defeated once and for all. Beran retired to start conducting his experiments at the temple. But the Arthemians had good cause to remember the evil priest, known only as 'The Boronic Hand', and his infamy spread far and wide.

Our story is now set and the basic outline history of the two major NPCs is written. Before outlining other NPCs and encounter situations, it is worthwhile looking at 'the beginning'. So often, RPGs lack a convincing reason for the players to involve themselves in the events which are about to unfold. If the GM can produce a positive commitment from the players, this will help to make other events much more convincing. The best time to achieve this is right at the beginning. Might I suggest something like the following ....

The player characters are travelling past a farm on the outskirts of some place called Lantero when they are attacked by a fearful monster (this can be anything of the GMs choice but it is the same creature which attacked Khalin and his brother). The fight goes against the player characters until, from an unexpected

angle, a giant of a man steps in and begins to attack the creature with a seemingly superhuman zeal. His attacks weaken the creature until, with a mighty sweep, the man hacks off its head. He approaches the corpse and breaks a macabre talisman from a chain around the creature's neck. The player characters see that he holds a skeletal right hand, on which is a ring he obviously recognises. He falls to his knees weeping.

From this, any number of ways can be found to introduce the players to Khalin and his story. The point is that he has just saved their lives — they *owe* him something. This can be a powerful persuader to them to accompany him on his quest, which will be, naturally, to discover the real fate of his brother and thus purge his guilt. All that remains is to find a device which will set Khalin and the players on Beran's trail.

Let me suggest that you read the first part of this piece again, paying particular attention to the facts concerning the landscape, people, politics and monsters we have already established or hinted at. Certainly we already have enough to provide a good storyline. A map of the country we are in could usefully be drawn and will, inevitably, add even more detail and new ideas to the adventure. Just the act of adding names to places could trigger off an idea for a sub-plot and an interesting NPC, maybe one who can give information (or even mislead). For example, I want to make one stop on the adventure in the rocky foothills of a mountain range. Perhaps the same mountain range which contains the Paths of Dread and the Temple of Shamadir?

I will call this encounter area the Ring of Stones, obviously some ancient holy place, signified by the deliberate placing of a series of rough stone monoliths in a circular formation. The Ring is in a clearing almost totally surrounded by cliffs which are dotted with caves — useful dwelling places, not only for orcs and wolves, but also for hermits, and it is the hermit we are interested in. Let's develop this character by the process described previously.

1. How did he get here? As a result of random wanderings he arrived here on foot, half crazed, and set up home in one of the caves. He has lived here for 2 years.

2. Why is he here rather than somewhere else? He is here as a result of his random wanderings. The reason he stays here is to worship his deity, purge himself of unworthiness and eventually to reclaim his former glory. As to whether he will be encountered in his cave or at the Ring itself, that will depend on the lifestyle we give him, ie his daily routine.

3. How does he earn his living? He doesn't exactly 'earn' his living at all. He subsists on a largely vegetable diet, eating wild tubers and berries. He gets water from a secret well and he does not have too far to travel each day to get his food. Remember also that he is a hermit engaged in a purification process — fasting or semi-fasting could be part of that process. Of course, his knowledge of herb-lore and of some of the powers of the mind have increased enormously while he's been here.

4. What was he doing an hour ago? Avoiding the temptation to be too blinkered, let's establish a sketchy daily routine for him, beginning early morning when he will be found kneeling in prayer at the centre of the ring. Later, he will walk in search of his daily food supply, which he will consume around noon. Later in the afternoon he will be at his cave doing housekeeping chores and preparing it for his resting period. Early evening sees him back in the Ring, trying to commune with his god. Mid-evening, he makes his way back to the cave and there indulges in a narcotic drug which puts him in a state of transcendental euphoria for a couple of hours. After this he sleeps till the following morning. The drug, derived from berries, is addictive and will eventually burn out his brain. This, then, is essentially his lifestyle from now until the day, not far off, when he will die from drug abuse.

5. Is he alone? The answer is, of course, yes. But we could, just as easily incorporate some sort of servant or periodic visitor to liven things up. This could be man or beast, friendly or otherwise. Just so long as it does not detract from the encounter, it is worthwhile experimenting with.

6. Does he have a name? A definite yes to this, for our hermit is none other than Drak'Nall — the priest who took Beran into his confidence and suffered the consequences.

Much more work could, and should, be done on Drak'Nall to fully establish him. We have given, or implied, a history for him stretching back around 5 to 10 years. But he must be at least 40 to 50 years old by now, so a sketchy study going back a further 10 years would prove useful and would probably yield some good ideas about his priestly order. Wheels within wheels ....

About this point, you might be tempted to think that I am quoting from an already created adventure and that, consequently, it all looks much easier than it actually is. I can only assure you, dear reader, that this is not the case and that, in fact, not one scrap of this information existed before I sat down to write. I have, therefore, created the main features of this adventure and its major NPCs in a matter of a few hours — say the equivalent of one evening's work. How the storyline is embellished and the number of other major NPCs incorporated into it is largely a question of how much time you have available.

Other sub-plots and NPCs can, and should, be brought in. These will relate directly to player characters. Maybe they will exist solely as a result of one or another player character being involved in the story. As long as these encounters do not destroy the internal logic of the adventure, they can only help to make it more interesting.

I would like to issue an invitation and a challenge to readers. It should be easy to draw a sketch map of the region covered by this adventure. There are obviously many places and encounters to be 'filled in' before the adventure is workable. Readers are invited to contribute their own NPCs and encounter areas for this adventure and perhaps we can follow its development using those contributions. Alternatively, if you feel really keen, why not have a go at completing the whole thing. I would run the adventure using the **Tunnels & Trolls** rules as I find them most conducive to RPG adventuring, but there is no reason at all why any set of rules could not be used. The important thing, at this stage, is not to get bogged down in character statistics and making your encounters fit the rules. Design the NPC and/or the encounter and make the rules fit them. Do something with your story. Ensure plenty of alternative outcomes exist to any given encounter. Add colour and 'body' to your game which will keep your players intrigued. Then go over and fill in the mechanical details.

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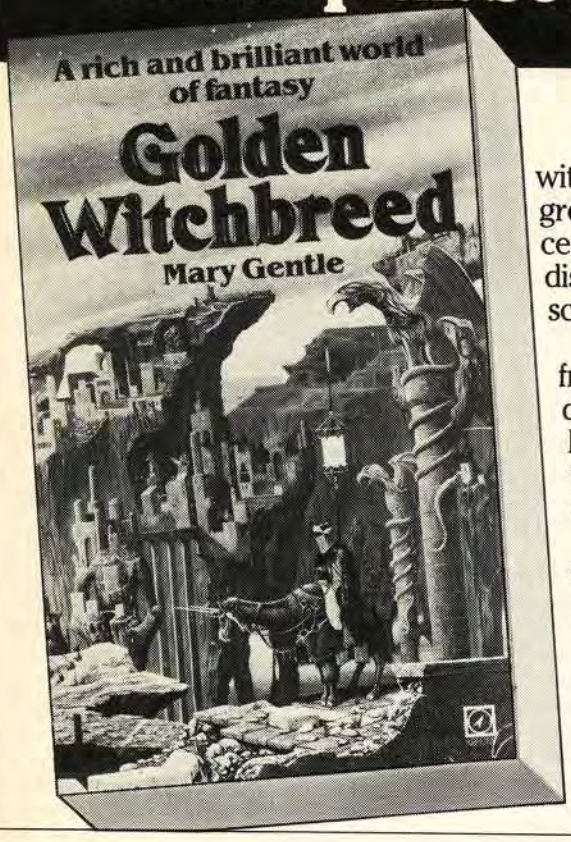

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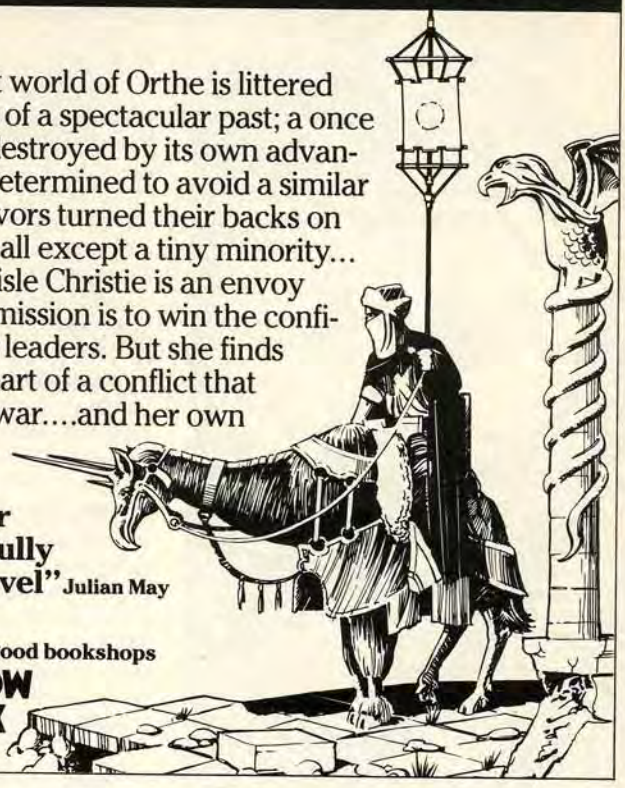

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ILLUMINATIONS

MARVELOUS TIMING

A quick look round. Clear to the right. Clear to the left. No TSR staff in sight so far as I can see. Right, so it's safe to mention the Marvel rpg. That's the TSR superheroes game over which the powers-that-be at Lake Geneva made such a snaffu of the licensing agreement. Forgot to include the UK in it or something like that. Well, I'm told that that game was designed by a bunch of lads who have since moved on and called themselves *Pacesetter*.

With a barely perceptible pause to draw breath, Pacesetter have designed and released a couple of games of their own, one of which is **Timemaster** (£11.95), one of those 'if it's Tuesday it must be the 21st century' time-spanning games.

Subjects for rpgs are highly influenced by fashion. In recent years we have had 1930s games; gothic horror; superheroes; history-based.... Is it now to be time for time-travelling? The curious thing is that several companies seem to release titles on a similar theme almost simultaneously so it's not necessarily a case of band-wagon jumping. Furthermore, if Pacesetter abbreviate their game's title and apply to have it trademarked, they will be able to call it TM™ and thus attract many kudos from envious competitors. I hope they do. A scenario for TM™ is also available, **Crossed Swords**, costing £4.95.

Another rpg from the same company is **Chills** (£11.95) which is a Call of Cthulhu type of game, although more suitable for beginning players. It is accompanied by two scenarios: **Village of Twilight** and **Highland Terror**, both at £4.95.

Transatlantic Tales

It's here! It's arrived! Honest, honest, this time we really mean it. The **D&D® Companion Set** is now out there in the shops, only awaiting £9.50 for it to be yours, all yours. There's even a module to go with it (aside from the one in the middle of this magazine, that is), CM1 **Test of the Warlords**. Rush out there, friends and neighbours — your life is incomplete without it....

Other recent releases: the first D&D Solo Module, **Ghost of Lion Castle**; the first CONAN® module, CB1 **Conan Unchained**, and the second module in the **Dragonlance** series, DL2 **Dragons of Flame**.

There will be more announcements of this magnitude next month.... we hope.

The Saga Remains the Same

Mention of the **Lone Wolf** books brings us nicely onto yet another in the interminable list of solo gamebooks that are being put out by every publisher and his dog. Actually, this latest one is not entirely new, but a development of the Armada **Grailquest** series. J H Brennan has now devised the **Sagas of the Demonspawn**, featuring Fire*Wolf. The interesting slant to this series is that it appears under the adult Fontana imprint. What does Fire*Wolf get up*to? What are some of the op*tions? What has the asterisk got to do with any*thing? The books should be on sale now....

Model Workers

The **Lone Wolf** books are yet another series of game books. I would guess that these things are attracting quite a few newcomers to the hobby, particularly among the 10-14 year olds. Now, Citadel Miniatures are releasing the first (that I have heard of) figures to be based on such books. They have a Lone Wolf set at £4.95 and ten individuals (different from the box contents) at 45p each. They also have two boxes of superhero figures for Games Workshop's much heralded, much advertised but hard to spot **Golden Heroes** game.

Coming up soon, Citadel promise a range of lizardmen designed by Trish Morrison, née Turner, at 45p each and some 1/144-ish scale robots (like those Japanese plastic kits) which will have a use in Battlecars among other games. These models will be about 30-40mm in size.

Another self-employed figure designer/producer has overnight become an employee. Robert Naismith, late of Naismith Design, has been captured by Citadel and borne off to languish in their Nottingham er, citadel. By Christmas the energetic Citadel team hope to have a couple of new **Warhammer** supplements, perhaps covering SF variants and providing a continent to campaign in. Not surprisingly, they are looking for new staff, particularly (so supremo Bryan Ansell says) from the ranks of the hobbyists. He has had a few lined up already but other companies have swooped in and pinched them from under his nose. However, that sounds as though anyone wanting a career of their hobby is in with a chance.

Victory Bonds

After a quiet start, the James Bond rpg seems to be finding its way in the world. Nice things are being said about the system and my own unscientific observations indicate a steady increase in sales. It has hauled itself out of the contending pack of rivals and its progress must be affording its publishers, Victory Games, some satisfaction. This progress is being given some firm consolidation by good back-up; plenty of advertising, glossy leaflets and, of course, adventure modules.

You Only Live Twice is one of two new releases. As the précis presents a plot totally unfamiliar to me, I must assume that it is based on the film rather than the book. Nevertheless, it's got plenty of attractive features: crashed Soviet space laboratory; deadly, mutating virus and, that sure-fire ingredient of success — Ninja. Once you can get those lads to pop up in your game you can start looking for your holiday home in the Seychelles.

The other new module is **Live and Let Die**. If I remember rightly, it was in this book that Felix Leiter, Fleming's token American, lost a high percentage of his appendages to a voracious fish. Certainly the module offers the delights of Mr Big and the powers of voodoo.

Both these modules promise to be up to the high standards of design and content of the rest of the James Bond system.

Spectacular Surge

Be prepared for a spectacular surge of **Star Trek** gaming releases. The trigger which will set off the explosion is the release by Games Workshop of a British printing of **Star Trek the Role-Playing Game** at £9.95. Backing up this home-produced version will be a host of goodies (there may be a few baddies lurking in there with them). The **Klingon Alien Pack** is a boxed repository of all known information on that unsavoury race. A Klingon-heavy scenario is included. **Star Trek 3** gives us ship plans in 25mm scale of the dear old *Enterprise* (that ship has been with us for so long now that it seems as archaic as Nelson's *Victory*) and a Klingon *D7* which is, so I am reliably informed, a class of vessel numerous in their order of battle. You want some scenarios? Well I have a list of eight which I am certainly not going to reproduce in full. **Denial of Destiny; The Vanished; Demand of Honour** and **Margin of Profit** are a sample of what's in store. Should you want a break from rpg-ing your way round the *Enterprise*, how about a few mini boardgames? I can suggest **In Search of Spock** and **Struggle for the Throne** for starters. There's much, much more.

Notices

The First Galaxy

First impressions are always important and on this **The First Galaxy — G1** falls down badly. The board, in the form of a spiral galaxy, looks like a cross between a cabalistic symbol and a hypnotist's aid; the playing pieces are made in a garish plastic and the whole presentation is, in a word, 'cheap'. The rule book referred to in the contents list is just two sides of rather poor blue print, the list itself is inaccurate (it states that there are 56 Supply Cards when there should only be 54, detailed later in the rules) and the scenario, as outlined in *'The Story of *G1* (The Quest)'*, is an insult to the intelligence of the average child, never mind the adult player. The casual browser in a games shop is not likely to be attracted either by the box or by its contents, but surprisingly, after all this, the game plays quite well!

The aim of 'G1' is relatively simple as the 5 players are trying to reach the scattered pieces of their own space stations, which are spread all over a spiral galaxy, and reassemble them, thus proving their superiority over the other races! Moves are by dice throw but have to be paid for in Fuel Cells. These can be gained at Fuel Dumps, and Supply Cards yield more, as well as laser weapons, shields and extra moves (which have to be paid for) all of which can be used to further your own efforts and to frustrate your opponents'. A successful attack by laser or by landing on your opponent's rocket sends it into the Blackhole in the centre of the galaxy (it's rather like Galactic Ludo) while movement can be along the spiral arms (there are 10) or in jumps from arm to arm. The rules are not totally comprehensive or unambiguous but 'house rules' can soon settle things; an example is whether a laser has to be fired along marked tracks only or whether it can follow the movement rules (probably the former although we played the latter).

All in all this is not a serious game but if you feel like some fun which involves some tactical thinking (perhaps after a hard game of **Starship Troopers**) then you will probably enjoy **The First Galaxy — G1**

Jon Conner

Powers & Perils

Avalon Hill have been remarkably slow to get into the RPG scene, but with their recent purchase of **RuneQuest** and now the release of their own **Powers & Perils** (and **Lords of Creation**) they have obviously decided that the time is ripe to make a push for a larger slice of the cake. With RQ under their wing they have, of course, a ready-made sales market, but what of Powers & Perils?

Well, firstly it appears that they are not directing the game at first-time buyers. Nowhere in the five booklets is there an explanation of exactly what an RPG is! However, this omission is perhaps not as serious as it may at first appear when it is considered that these days there is almost no-one who hasn't heard of RPGs and most buyers will have been introduced via other systems anyway. Still, an omission nonetheless.

The rules themselves are contained in four booklets which come boxed together with a fifth introductory scenario booklet, 2d10, 1d6 and a pad of P&P character sheets. Presentation of the rules is reasonable with some fine artwork, let down by a few appalling pieces which I cannot believe were allowed to slip through.

The first of the four rules booklets details character generation and is perhaps one of the most complex currently on the market. Although there are quite a lot of dice rolls involved in the process, there is a fair degree of player control in the shaping of a character — this appears to be becoming the norm these days. Firstly, players generate 'Native Ability' factors for each of their prime requisites. This factor is the starting ability of the character, but can be increased as the player gains experience up to the 'maximum ability' (generated by applying multipliers to the NA from a second roll of the dice). Players also generate an 'Initial Increase Factor' because *'it is rational to assume that every character was active in his world before the game began'* (a 'rationality' with which I disagree). This factor is allocated by players in various proportions to increase their PRs, increase their combat experience, start with expertise in various skills and generate wealth. Players must also decide which race they wish to be, human, elf, dwarf or faerry.

Powers & Perils is a skills rather than class based system, and these skills are also listed in booklet one. There are only 34 non-combat skills given, but these are the ones most likely to be needed by players and have clear explanation of their use and limitations. Also given is a vast equipment list covering most items characters will ever want.

The second booklet concerns itself with the combat and magic systems. Every RPG has its strengths and weaknesses; unfortunately in the case of P&P it is let down by its combat system. Surprisingly, unlike most 'modern' RPGs, which have gone in for more complex and 'realistic' combat systems, P&P takes a backward step, becoming nothing more than a hit/miss type affair. This is a shame because in stark contrast the magic system is well thought out, logical and very practical.

Firstly, no character can automatically become a magic user. If he wishes to study magic he must be accepted for instruction (determined by a die roll based on the PR for the magic path desired).

Games Reviews

DL1 — Dragonlance

The DL1 module **Dragonlance** is the first in a series set in the world of Krynn. Krynn seems to have had a tough time lately, with clerical magic unknown and recent natural disasters having plunged at least one decent-sized empire into the sea. The background information provided is sufficient to give players the feel of their new world, and to set the scene for a number of potential sequels.

A group of seasoned adventurers (levels 4-6) splits up to individually search for true clerical magic, which has become lost to their world. Some good pre-rolled characters are provided. These include a new character race — the 'Kender', who proved entertaining to play. Existing characters can be brought in but clerics will obviously struggle a little.

Gathering some five years later, they recount their experiences to each other and find that none has succeeded. Little known to them, they are soon to be deeply involved in a quest of great importance. The quest entangles characters deeply in a steady stream of events and encounters, covering much of the land of Krynn. A great deal of quite detailed material is provided for the many different locales and encounters, and background events, which serve to give the party a sense of peril and urgency. The only problem I had as DM was reading the rather flowery prose without being laughed down by the players. Revenge is at hand, however, in making the players sing a couple of epic-style silly songs.

The conclusion of the mission is set ingeniously in a city ruined and partially buried by an earthquake. The finale will certainly challenge the party, and make up for any feeling that early encounters did not seriously endanger anyone. A successful outcome will neatly set up the next adventure, *à la* Star Wars.

I enjoyed this module a lot. It is well-detailed and original, and plays well. Good value! ***Steve Hampshire***

None of your magic for everyone, or illogical restriction in favour of 'play balance' here. Indeed, players will find their own restrictions, as an adventurer will find it a very slow process advancing in magic use if he uses experience on combat skills rather than improving his performance and learning new spells. Players may choose one of three types of magic user — wizards (sub-divided into those serving the forces of law, chaos and balance), shamans and sidhs (like druids). Each of these has advantages and disadvantages with certain spells being easy to cast for one type and difficult for others, spell casting being regulated by expenditure of 'manna' points. The listing of spells is fairly large, well laid out and has clear, logical explanations.

Also contained in this booklet is a brief 'background' to the mythos created for P&P. The detail here is scanty, but we are told that a companion product will deal with the subject in depth at a future date.

The third and fourth booklets are as well presented as the first two, giving details of human and 'creature' encounters as well as encounter tables and treasure/magic item listings. The scenario given in the fifth and final booklet is well presented and should act as a good introduction to the rules for player and GM alike.

I have my doubts as to whether P&P will make it as a widely popular RPG, but I am sure it will gain a considerable and well-deserved following. Hopefully, Avalon Hill will develop it to its full potential, and I look forward to seeing future releases for P&P from them.

Mike Dean

TS006 — Ace of Clubs

Ace of Clubs is an investigation into a series of 'accidents' at an exclusive country club in upstate New York, the resort being a cover for a Western spy school. It is designed for 2-6 novice agents.

The format bears a striking resemblance to the original scenario, **Sprechenhalstenstelle**; for example, in the hidden casino and the inclusion of rumours. As such it contains throwbacks to dungeon adventuring such as 'exploring' the underground area with corridors and secret doors. More alarming is the obsession with money — some of the possible encounters include notes and casino chips, presumably discarded by rich guests. Does James Bond go around looting items or worrying about paying?

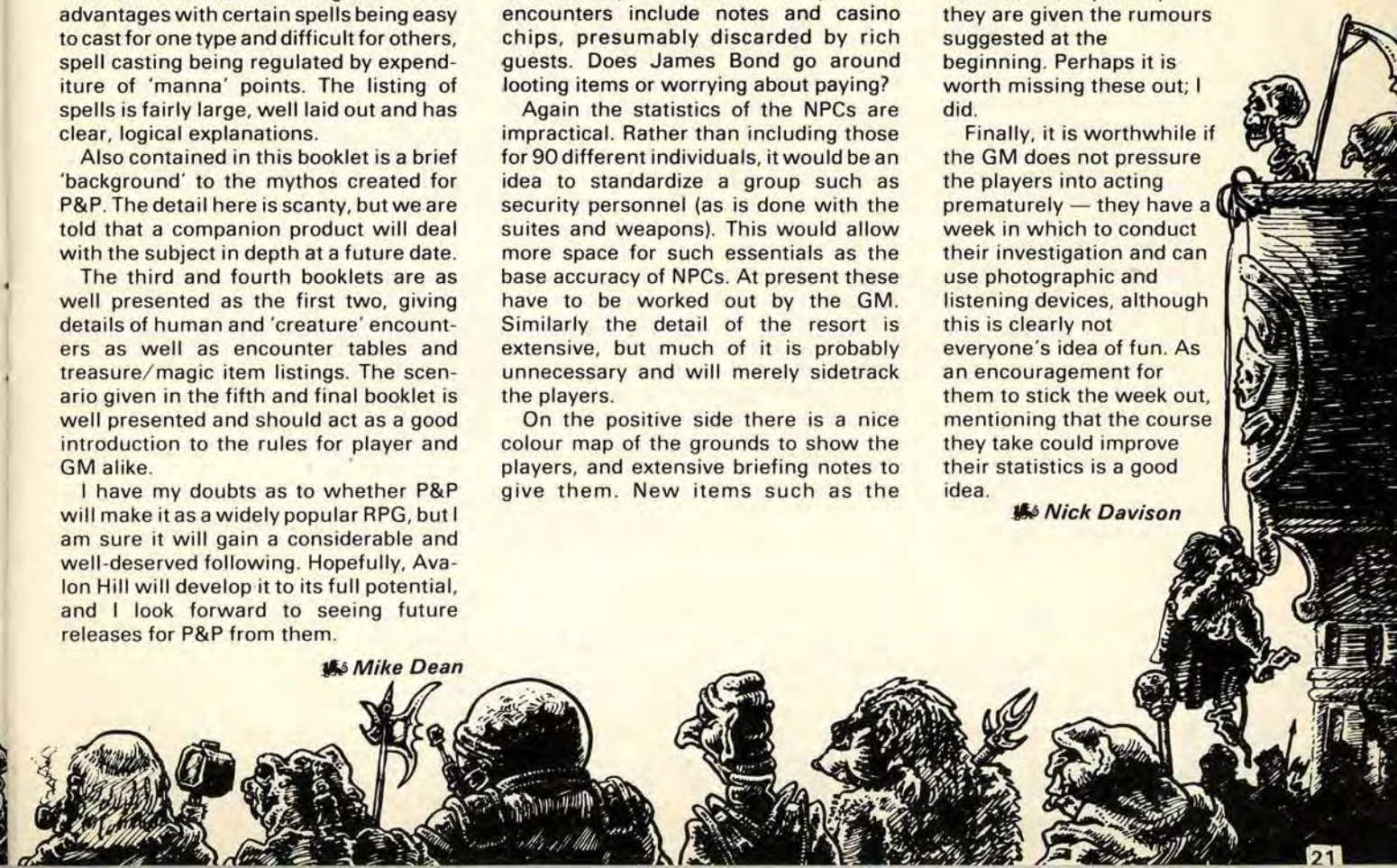
Again the statistics of the NPCs are impractical. Rather than including those for 90 different individuals, it would be an idea to standardize a group such as security personnel (as is done with the suites and weapons). This would allow more space for such essentials as the base accuracy of NPCs. At present these have to be worked out by the GM. Similarly the detail of the resort is extensive, but much of it is probably unnecessary and will merely sidetrack the players.

On the positive side there is a nice colour map of the grounds to show the players, and extensive briefing notes to give them. New items such as the Ingrams SMG and an experimental Ultrasonic Bombarder are described. I also liked the information on how to calculate damage when players run through kitchens or are exposed to extremes of temperature — something which always seems to happen in espionage films and novels.

This is a disappointment after the excellent **Orient Express** and unlike that scenario it will not provide many sessions of play. The 'mystery' which the players are given to solve seems a bit too shallow, especially if they are given the rumours suggested at the beginning. Perhaps it is worth missing these out; I did.

Finally, it is worthwhile if the GM does not pressure the players into acting prematurely — they have a week in which to conduct their investigation and can use photographic and listening devices, although this is clearly not everyone's idea of fun. As an encouragement for them to stick the week out, mentioning that the course they take could improve their statistics is a good idea.

Nick Davison



Notices & Games Review

Quest (for 48K Spectrum)

This is an adventure with *Hobbit*-style graphics, and a very good adventure it is too, the object being to find a map and an ancient scroll.

The cassette comes in a standard size box, with a nice colourful picture on the front of the inlay card. The program instructions are printed on the inside of the card, which folds out, allowing quite comprehensive instructions to be included. The cassette has a copy of **Quest** on each side, and both loaded perfectly. Loading takes approximately 5.20 minutes, after which a siren informs you that the load has been successful. You are then asked to choose the type of character you want. There are five classes of character: wizard, cleric, rogue, fighter and simpleton. The character is then assigned 5 random attribute scores: strength, luck, dexterity, constitution and charm. The maximum scores are given in the inlay card. The sixth attribute 'adds' depend on the other five scores.

I have never achieved even half the maximum values for any attribute, thus my character died every time he got into a fight. The program allows you five resurrections; after that you must reload the program. After about seven reloads, I decided to stop charging in with the boot swinging! Subtlety was needed. The attribute scores go up due to the various things you find or buy. Eating bread is a good way, but usually when you try to buy it, *that item is out of stock* appears on the screen. When I thought my scores were high enough, I set out to waste the rat that had killed me so often, — not before saving the game, though. Oh, how I enjoyed wiping the ground with that rodent.

The combat system is explained on the inlay card, along with a price list and a catalogue of various weapons and spells you can buy. Every character in Quest can cast spells, some more than others. It takes strength and dexterity to cast a spell, the points being regained at the rate of one per minute. You must name the creature you cast the spell at, eg *cast magiczap at rat*. But beware, if the spell does not kill the creature, you may find you are too weak to fight it. Certain creatures cannot be fought at all, and some only with spells.

You can find out about creatures and things by typing *help* followed by the name or whatever you are interested in, eg *help sword*. You are allowed to have nine items on your person, but I have found that things tend to stay where you leave them. Death can be quite sudden, so be on your guard. If you get stuck, *hint* sometimes gives you a clue, but not often, and when it does the clue can be very cryptic. Gold pieces turn up at various locations, at various times, and there are never enough of them, so spend wisely.

The world of Quest is richly populated by monsters and wizards. Dwarves tend to be helpful, wandering about giving cryptic clues. There is a psychopathic elf who runs about lobbing axes at you, and running away before you can hit him. Not every location has a picture, and once you have been there, the picture is not drawn again unless you *look*. There are several mazes, every one solvable, and plenty of things to kill and treasures to find.

The response time is excellent but you can quite easily type too quickly for the keyboard scan to pick up the letter you have typed. The only other fault is when you quit, or die six times, the computer locks up and you have to pull the plug out. On my copy of Quest there is a mistake on the inlay card price list, where you can buy a maze for nine gold pieces. I think this should read *mace*.

To anyone who enjoys a good adventure, Quest is highly recommended.

Daniel T Canavan

Tin Soldier

The Tin Soldier of Southsea, Hants, have sent us some samples of their 25mm and 15mm Fantasy Ranges. So far Tin Soldier offer about forty types in their 25mm series, and nearly sixty in 15mm; apart from a Were Dingo, a rather mind-boggling reminder of the firm's Australian origins, most of those listed are standard types, the usual mix of adventurers, orcs, goblins and so on.

In style, the figures have a chunky look similar to those of **Chronicle**, but without some of the bulk. Our samples included a couple of goblins, best described as 'spikey', since they boast pointed ears, noses, spiked helmets, and sharp encrusted armour; a nice dwarf hero, with features reminiscent of a dark-age statue; a cleric, whose proportions seemed a bit stunted for a human, but who might make a reasonable hobbit; and a berserker. A most original figure this, clutching an axe in one hand, a dagger in his teeth, and drawing a sword from a scabbard on his back. He is naked apart from a wolf-skin over his shoulders, and the excitement of the fray has certainly got to him — but beware, as the firm's lists say, 'this figure might offend'!

Generally, the standard of sculpting is high, and the casting definition crisp. This is even more apparent in the 15mm range, which includes a very nice set of giant goblins. The crisp, clean details of the larger scale have reduced very well, giving the 15mm range a super-detailed look, without making them too fussy. The figures themselves have the usual low, long-legged, pug-faced shambling appearance associated with giant goblins. A giant in the same series is very nice, and again very Scandinavian in style, with wolf-skin cloak and ale-tankard at his belt; he is also, incidentally, about 25mm high, and so would serve as a fighter in that scale too. The extras in the 15mm range include figures mounted on a variety of dinosaur types, which should be interesting.

Prices average 30p for a 25mm figure and 9p for a 15mm figure.

Ian Knight

Product information

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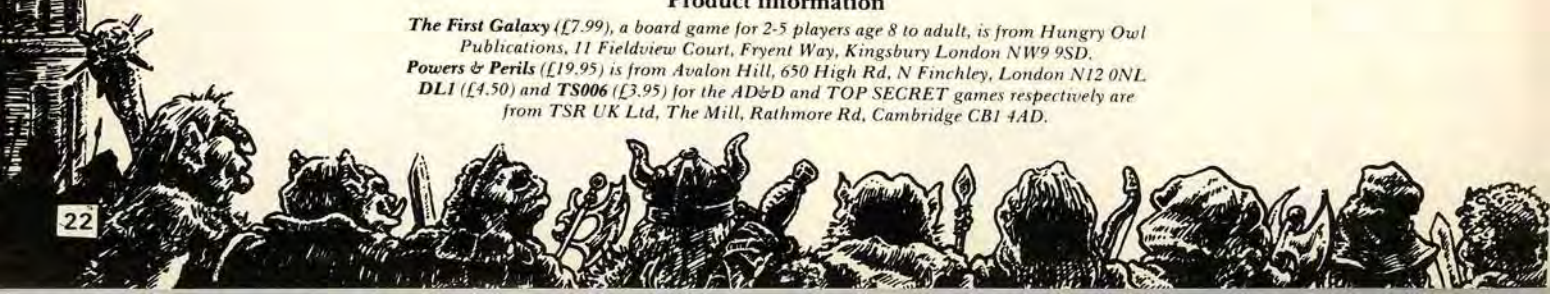

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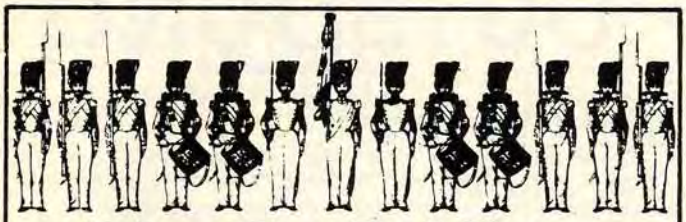

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SINVEL'S PERIL

by Doug Cowie

Sinvel's Peril is a **D&D®** mini-module for a group of 4-7 characters of 12th-15th level. You will require access to copies of the Basic, Expert and Companion rules to use this module.

If you intend to play in this adventure, you should not read any further. Knowing details will spoil the game for all concerned.

Where information on NPCs and monsters is presented in the text, it is given at the end of the relevant section in the following format:

Name; Armour Class (AC); Character Class/Level or Hit Dice (HD); hit points (hp); Movement (MV); Number of Attacks (#AT); Damage (D); Save as; Morale (M); Alignment (AL); Experience Point Value (xp); appropriate notes — Special abilities, Spells (by level), Weapons and Equipment

DM's NOTES

Because of the nature of the area, Renima, in which this adventure is set, it will work best with a predominance of fighter adventurers. The DM should limit the magical capabilities of player characters: no more than 14 levels of magic user should be allowed, although this total can be made up as one 14th level wizard, or two 7th level magic users or whatever. Clerics, including druids, are restricted in a similar fashion.

Other classes should also be restricted. There should be a maximum of two thieves, one elf (elves are rare creatures), and no dwarves. Any demi-human characters at maximum level may gain the advantages conferred by having a higher accumulation of experience points.

Renima is an area of low magic, and magic items are as rare as hens' teeth. However, it is of interest to note that the Tamoadab Fighting Hen of western Karthrun actually does have teeth — the result of cross-breeding for ferocity. Characters should be limited in the number of magic items that they possess: Magic users may have one item per 4 levels, clerics and thieves one per 6, fighters one per 7, elves one per 3, and halflings a maximum of one item. If player characters have to temporarily discard items, the player may choose which items are kept.

Background Information

The province of Welsma is large and varied. Mountain ranges border the north and west whilst unhealthy marshlands lie to the east. The southern boundary is marked by the River Aub'ron, beyond which are the Beastlands.

Welsma is a human province, with communities of dwarves living in the surrounding mountains. Elves, halflings and orcs are rare, and usually avoid human society. Welsma has no single provincial government, a state of affairs which has lasted for several hundred years since the fall of the Southern Princes. Vast tracts of land are covered by the Great Forest, a sea of trees which make communications difficult.

Most people believe that magic exists, although few have seen a practical demonstration of it — or clerical magic for that matter. The more credulous, drunken or superstitious humans believe a vast number of fantastical creatures lurk in the wilderness, even though few have seen such beings, or evidence of their existence.

Sinvel marks the northern limit of civilization. It is essentially a farming community, a ready market where farmers can trade surpluses for manufactured articles. It is thriving, industrious, rather priggish and ruled by a Council of Elders, the leading figure of which is the Invoker, the most powerful cleric in Welsma. Sinvel has always relied for defence upon an informal alliance with Karthrun (based on a common antipathy to Miltrin), and its own feudal levies.

Miltrin lies 80 miles to the south, a wealthy city thanks to the exploitation of silver deposits in the nearby Dragic Mountains. These mines are regulated by the Grand Council of Miltrin for the benefit of all. Miltrin has few poor inhabitants, and strictly controls the influx of outsiders. Toilsome work, such as the cultivation of land, is avoided by anyone who can avoid it — much excellent land lies within Miltrin's boundaries, but it is mainly given over to large hunting estates for the nobility. As a result food is imported, often from Sinvel, although such is the antipathy between the two cities that Miltrin citizens would rather pay double to anybody else than purchase food from Sinvel.

Cultured Miltrin opinion is against the idea of an army, so the only class to follow the profession of arms is the nobility. The only native force under the control of the Grand Council is The Mayor's Regiment of Horse — the 'Death Squadron' — although most nobles keep feudal retainers and mercenaries. The Grand Council employs bands of foreign mercenaries on a more or less permanent basis — including Dwarven units. Miltrin has had a long history of good relations with Dwarves.

Between Miltrin and Sinvel lies the Pelwold, an area of great agricultural abundance. Although it is slightly closer to Miltrin, the Pelwold is part of Sinvel's territory. The Grand Council has always coveted this area, even though cultivation is totally foreign to the Miltrin nature. Skirmishes have occurred in the area between Miltrin and Sinvelan patrols, but so far open war has been avoided.

Karthrun is the largest city in Welsma. Situated on the banks of the River Aub'ron, it is surrounded by mighty walls and its Citadel is a formidable fortress. The city is virtually impregnable. The Tyrant of Karthrun is an implacable military dictator, and his legions are numerous and doughty — supported by mercenaries and feudal contingents, they are without equal in Welsma. Most of the time they are in action against incursions from the Beastlands, but whenever a lull occurs, the Tyrant's attention turns to the north. Miltrin, with its silver, its university, its culture, its fine buildings, its cosmopolitan atmosphere, its irreligious bombast, but most of all its silver, is always an inviting prospect.

Tressnor is a small, dirty village over 200 miles to the east of Sinvel. It is the centre of a marcher fief: barbarous, wild and uncivilised. The Marchioness holds her lands by a direct grant from Sinvel. She is not unduly worried by the relative isolation; she and her liegemen are the kind who relish the life of war and work that is the lot of border nobles.

Beginning the Adventure

The human player characters are assumed to begin the game as liegemen of the Marchioness of Tressnor or as part of her personal retinue, or as travellers who are called upon to help in time of crisis. A thief in the party could be the Tressnor Guildmaster, or a travelling rogue. Any elf in the party should be an ally of the Marchioness, from the Elvish Clan lands some 80 miles to the west of Tressnor. Such a character will not have any knowledge of the Great Forest. Any halflings may be landholders, and owe allegiance to the Marchioness, or be townsmen from Tressnor or mercenaries in the Marchioness' forces.

The adventure commences when the player characters are summoned to the presence of the Marchioness to hear the news from Sinvel. She has been summoned by the Elders of Sinvel to fulfil her feudal obligations — not for six generations have the Elders made such demands. Sinvel is in deadly peril.

Several weeks ago, a ferocious horde of barbarians appeared from beyond the Northern Mountains. Having routed the dwarves from their Halls of Stone, they are massing for an attack upon Sinvel. The Elders are therefore calling on all available forces, including the Marchioness and her liegemen. A messenger has arrived, bearing a formal summons for the Marchioness and her forces. The messenger is also carrying a second, secret message.

This second message is of vital importance. The Invoker, chief among the Council of Elders and spiritual leader of Sinvel, is missing. While making a Progress through the Pelwold, his escort was surprised and destroyed — the Invoker and his servant were the only survivors, and they have been taken to Miltrin.

Sinvel is in the depths of despondency. Without the Invoker the townspeople believe their coming struggle with the barbarians to be a lost cause. Without the Invoker and his powerful spells what hope is there? The Elders made contact with the Grand Council, but it was obvious to all that satisfactory exchange arrangements could not be made. Even when, in sheer desperation, the Elders offered the Pelwold as ransom for the Invoker the only answer was a curt refusal. The Grand Council wants nothing less than total surrender —Sinvel as a vassal state, with a Miltrin Governor and a Miltrin mercenary garrison. Even this demand was seriously considered, but eventually the Elders decided that death would be preferable to humiliating capitulation.

The gist of the second message is that the Marchioness should gather all her forces — and those of her liegemen, for every soldier is required — and proceed with all possible speed to Sinvel to help delay the final assault. Her most able liegemen — and any others she can gather (the player characters) — should travel into Miltrin territory and free the Invoker. Resourcefulness and subterfuge on the part of a few will accomplish more than any army could.

Further, the Elders have added a rider to this instruction. In travelling to Miltrin from Tressnor, any rescue party must inevitably pass through the Great Forest. Centuries ago, elves controlled the Forest and allowed peaceable travellers to pass in exchange for a small toll. However, since the elves were driven out, travel through the woods has become hazardous. Bandits — peasantry displaced by Sinvel's expansion — now attack the trade route to Karthrun without restraint.

Sinvel has every reason to hope for Karthrun support in the coming struggle with the barbarians; it is not in the Tyrant's interests for Sinvel to be absorbed into a barbarian empire or Miltrin. Any increase in Miltrin's strength would reduce Karthrun influence. It is believed that a Karthrun contingent is already heading to Sinvel's relief. The only practical route for such a force is through Miltrin territory; the route through the Forest is impassable to large forces. To gain news of this force, and to establish reliable communications with Karthrun, it is imperative that the bandits be suppressed. A large force could not enter the Forest, so The Elders — frugal as always — propose that the Invoker's rescuers should deliver a salutory blow to the bandits as well.

Players' Background

The player characters' meeting with the Marchioness is short and to the point — she is not a woman to be bothered with social graces when there is the prospect of fine outdoor activity like war! When her liegemen, allies and acquaintances are gathered, she will briefly explain the position — neglecting to mention the capture of the Invoker. She will then call the adventurers to a private meeting with herself and Selmer, a Roamer — a member of a semi-formal fighting order who spend their time wandering the wilds.

The Marchioness will begin by explaining the true position, and how the rescue of the Invoker is vital to any military victory. After informing the adventurers that any troops they may possess will accompany her to Sinvel, she will allow Selmer to explain the details of the special mission that the player characters must carry out. Then, with a cavalier attitude to the dangers that await, she will leave.

Selmer is a a lean man in nondescript, travel-worn clothes, his face largely hidden beneath a floppy brimmed hat. He will turn to the adventurers with a grim face and tell the following:

'Although we Roamers take no sides in disputes between Sinvel, Miltrin and Karthrun, the barbarians must be halted at all costs. You must open the route to Karthrun — and swiftly! — and rescue the Invoker. Only he, through the love of his people if nothing else, can halt the northern hordes.... although he will not spurn the aid of the Tyrant's legions!

'The Great Forest is beset by wicked men, displaced from their homes by such as the Marchioness. Their hatred of Sinvel and its allies is, to them, largely justified, but they nevertheless make much mischief, and the journey through the Forest will be hazardous. Over the last few years, their strength has grown — aided by some mysterious power. You must find out what this is, and destroy it. The bandits themselves are too numerous and scattered to deal with, but if their new strength were lost, that would surely dishearten them. That is the first part of your task.

'The second is of greater import — free the Invoker! He is held in the hunting lodge of Lord Atava, to the south of Miltrin. His lodge — castle would be a better word — is strong and you should not try to storm it. As long as you are careful, you should have no trouble in entering the castle; travelling knights are common in that area, and jousts are popular with Miltrin's nobility....

'Once in the castle it should be a relatively simple matter to locate and release The Invoker. We can only hope that he is still there when you arrive. Once you have effected his release, it is but a short journey to the nearest Kathrun outposts.

'Luck, my Lords!'

Selmer will provide directions to take the party to the only trail into the Forest, and the location of Lord Atava's 'hunting lodge'.

Supplies

The adventurers will be given (or should already have) a horse or pony, and one pack animal each. The pack animals are carrying sufficient supplies for three weeks of wilderness travel — hard tack, preserved food, a small amount of wine etc — and any reasonable equipment the DM cares to allow. The Great Forest is stocked with game, and the supplies can be augmented by fresh meat.

The Bandits of The Great Forest

Using Selmer's directions, the adventurers will have no difficulty in finding the trail from Tressnor to the edge of the Forest. At the edge of the Forest, the trail becomes a broad bridleway, a 10 yard wide path cleared of trees and undergrowth, although the grass is long and unkempt. On either side of the path the Forest is a wilderness of trees, bushes, brambles, bogs, pools and thorns.

Movement along the trail to the Forest is at normal speed, (Expert Rules, p41), but once on the bridleway this drops to two-thirds normal speed, even though it is a cleared path. Movement through the undergrowth away from the path is difficult and treacherous. Horses must be led, and the rate of progress is cut to one quarter normal speed. Once away from the path the foliage is so dense that the sky can no longer be seen, and the chance of the adventurers becoming lost is equal to that of travelling in swamp. This is reduced to normal if there is an elf in the party.

After travelling into the Forest for one day the adventurers should be at the junction of the bridleways to Sinvel and Karthrun (point A on the Welsma Province map). Their instructions are to travel south. From this point on, the bridleway to the south is untended, and the undergrowth encroaches upon the path. In addition, the progress of the party will be monitored by the bandits of the Forest, one of whom will always be spying upon the party. There is a 1 in 20 chance (2 in 20 for an elven character) each hour that one of the adventurers will spot the watcher — a human or humanoid figure disappearing into the gloom beneath the trees some distance away. Pursuit of the bandit will prove fruitless — the bandits are entirely at home in their environment and suffer no movement penalties.

A bandit patrol (see below) will first attack the adventurers some six or seven miles beyond the bridleway junction. If possible, this attack will occur while the adventurers are making or breaking camp. The attackers will be careful to keep in the undergrowth on each side of the bridleway and use melee weapons. After 2d4 melee rounds the bandits will break off their attack and vanish into the gloom. Again, pursuit will be futile unless one or more of the bandits has been wounded.

15 bandits: AC 6; Fighter 1; hp 5 each; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save: Th1; M 8; AL C; xp 10 each; armed with shortbows and shortswords.

The DM should use this bandit ambush as an irritant — and repeat it twice more if necessary (depending upon casualties among the adventurers). The ambush should serve to warn the adventurers that they are in hostile territory.

Adventurers who blunder about in the undergrowth will be harassed by yet another bandit patrol. The noise of this fight — should it occur — will attract a further two patrols, who will arrive 1d6 rounds later. Once united, the bandits will initiate close combat with the adventurers. The 45 bandits will be confident in their attack, and call upon the party to surrender. Any who do will be disarmed, stripped of all valuables and murdered — the bandits are completely ruthless.

18 miles south of the junction, the undergrowth along either side of the bridleway changes subtly in appearance. Closer examination will reveal that the living foliage has been closely woven together forming an almost inpenetrable barrier. This barrier extends for 30 to 40 yards into the Forest, isolating the bridleway from the body of the Forest proper. Cutting through this hedge-like boundary is an exhausting process, and anyone attempting to do so will only be able to cut a path 5' long per turn. After 3 turns of cutting, 3 turns of rest must be taken. Once through the barrier, the natural undergrowth is as thick as ever, and speed is only one quarter normal.

At the point marked B the bandits have diverted the bridleway. It is blocked by a massive pile of old tree trunks, thorny bushes and brambles. To the west, the path narrows to about 10 feet, and is rather overgrown. At this point a sizeable force of the bandits in this part of the Forest will be encountered:

The bandit leader, a werewolf: AC 5(9); HD 10*; hp 50; MV 180' (60'); #AT 1; D 2-8; Save as F10; M 10; AL C; xp 1600; **Ring of Regeneration**; Non-standard werewolf, but still causes lycanthropy, attacks with the wolf pack below.

10 bandit sub-leaders: AC 4; Fighter 3; hp 15 each; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as Th3; M 9; AL C; xp 35 each; armed with longswords.
90 bandits: AC 6; Fighter 1; hp 5 each; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as Th1; M 8; AL C; xp 10 each; 40 armed with shortbows and shortswords, the rest shortswords only.
30 wolves: AC 7; HD 2+2; hp 12 each; MV 180' (60'); #AT 1; D 1-6; Save as F1; M 8 or 6; AL N; xp 25 each.

The bandits have little treasure. Each has coins or a small gem worth 2-20gp.

The bandits will attempt to kill the adventurers or drive them from the Forest. Any spells of higher than 3rd level cast at the bandits will cause them to undergo an immediate morale check, failure indicating that they stand frozen in awe for 1d6 rounds. If the bandits lose the fight, they will retreat into the depths of the Forest to 'lick their wounds' — the adventurers will not encounter any more. Again, any adventurers foolish enough to surrender will be murdered.

Should the adventurers take any prisoners, they will have no difficulty in learning that the bandits are spread throughout the Forest, although no bandit will reveal any specific encampment. The adventurers will also be able to learn that the allies of the bandits are dwarves, who live in a far-from-typical community beneath a hill in the centre of the Forest. If the adventurers follow the re-routed bridleway, they will eventually come to this singular hill.

The Dwarves In Their Halls of Stone

Some twenty miles or so down the diverted bridleway, the path opens out into a circular clearing where the undergrowth has been burnt and cut back for years. The clearing is several hundred feet across, and in its centre stands a hill that is obviously not a natural phenomenon. The summit of the hill is perfectly normal, a rocky outcrop covered by undergrowth and scrub oaks, but it is surrounded by a cliff of polished stone. This vertical wall from ground level to the summit gives the hill the appearance of a vast column of marble, over 300 feet in diameter.

The hill is not actually marble, but skilfully worked limestone which presents a completely smooth surface. About 30 feet above the ground, directly opposite the bridleway, is a small door, cut into the face of the cliff. There is a similar door on the other side of the hill.

A community of 40 male adult dwarves live below the hill, which they have carved to its present impressive shape. Two hundred dwarves moved to the hill some 100 years ago at the urging of the Grand Council of Miltrin, brought by the promise of new hills to mine. The dwarven presence over the last century has served to make the bandits bolder in their depredations, thus indirectly achieving the Grand Council's aim of cutting Sinvel's trade route. However, it is only in the last ten years — as the mine beneath the hill became exhausted — that the dwarves have actively supported the bandits.

Since the mine is no longer fully productive, many of the dwarves have returned to their homes in the Dragic Mountains. The 40 remaining live a strange existence, in an parody of a human monastery. After the settlement had been established, the Grand Council sent a disgraced cleric to aid the dwarves. While helping them with his magical powers, this man unfortunately created religious awe in the minds of the dwarves. Upon his death the cleric was embalmed and his remains placed upon a throne in the dwarves' temple. It is there that this community still worship, and as a mark of respect for the cleric, they have adopted 'typical' human names and affect lives of pious simplicity.

The dwarves are lead by Jon-Jaymes Money and his lieutenant, Property-is-Theft. Under them, the community is divided into two watches, or 'Anvils' of 18 dwarves each. The last two dwarves are the Master of Observances, Wizened Ape, and Jon-Jaymes' guard-dwarf, Trinkets, Mere Trinkets.

Jon-Jaymes Money: AC 0; Dwarf 8; hp 54; MV 60' (20'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as Dw8; M 10 or 3; AL N; xp 650; **platemail +3**, battle axe, Attack Rank E.
Property-is-Theft: AC 3; Dwarf 8; hp 48; MV 60' (20'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as Dw8; M 10 or 3; AL N; xp 650; platemail, bastard sword, crossbow, Attack Rank D.
Wizened Ape: AC 6; Dwarf 5; hp 25; MV 60' (20'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as Dw5; M 12 or 2; AL N; xp 175; ceremonial robes, mace, **Staff of Healing** (15 charges).
Trinkets, Mere Trinkets: AC 1; Dwarf 8; hp 72; MV 60' (20'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as Dw8*; M 10; AL N; xp 650; platemail, battle axe, Attack Rank G.
2 Anvil Commanders: AC 3; Dwarf 7; hp 40; MV 60' (20'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as Dw7; M 9 or 2; AL N; xp 450; platemail, bastard swords, heavy crossbows.
36 Dwarves: AC 3; Dwarf 6; hp 34; MV 60' (20'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as Dw6; M 9 or 2; AL N; xp 350; platemail, battle axes, heavy crossbows.

Most of the dwarves are given two morale numbers. The DM should use the first of these numbers until the temple or the body of the cleric is destroyed. The second reflects their loss of heart should this occur.

The hill's defence is well organised. The duty watch is in the guardroom and the armoury. At random intervals (every 2d4 turns), a dwarf is sent to inspect the entrance halls. The dwarves use the winch mechanisms by the doors to raise and lower iron cages when they wish to leave their home or allow their bandit-allies to enter. They believe the cliff face is too smooth to allow anyone to climb up to the doors.

The off-duty watch members are either asleep in one of the dormitories, at their devotions within the Temple, or working at the mine face or in the workshops. Jon-Jaymes is usually to be found meditating within his chambers, accompanied by Trinkets, Mere Trinkets. Property-is-Theft spends his waking hours stalking the halls and tunnels of the hill, or in careful labour upon gemstones in the workshops. Wizened Ape will be found in the Priest's Quarters or the Temple, leading others in prayer. He also arranges small 'miracles' (unexplained lights, odd noises and sweet-smelling breezes) for the dwarves, using a variety of mechanisms hidden in the Temple's secret passage. The majority of the dwarves suspect that Wizened Ape is responsible for these, as the 'miracles' are extremely dull, but it has not affected their faith.

Once intruders are spotted, the alarm will be raised. All the dwarves will come to the defence of their home and — even more important — their shrine. The off-duty watch will start to arrive, 1-3 dwarves at a time, 5-20 rounds after the alarm has been raised. Jon-Jaymes and Trinkets, Mere Trinkets will be the last to arrive — Jon-Jaymes is not of a violent nature. Wizened Ape will not join the fight, but will remain in the rear and use his healing powers.

The halls beneath the hill are constructed with a high degree of skill. All the chambers and tunnels (except the mine workings and secret corridors) are lined with blocks of stone cut to fit together perfectly. The doors are also constructed of stone, some 3 inches thick, cleverly hung so that they can be swung open with the minimum of effort. The various secret doors are disguised to look like any other part of the stonework.

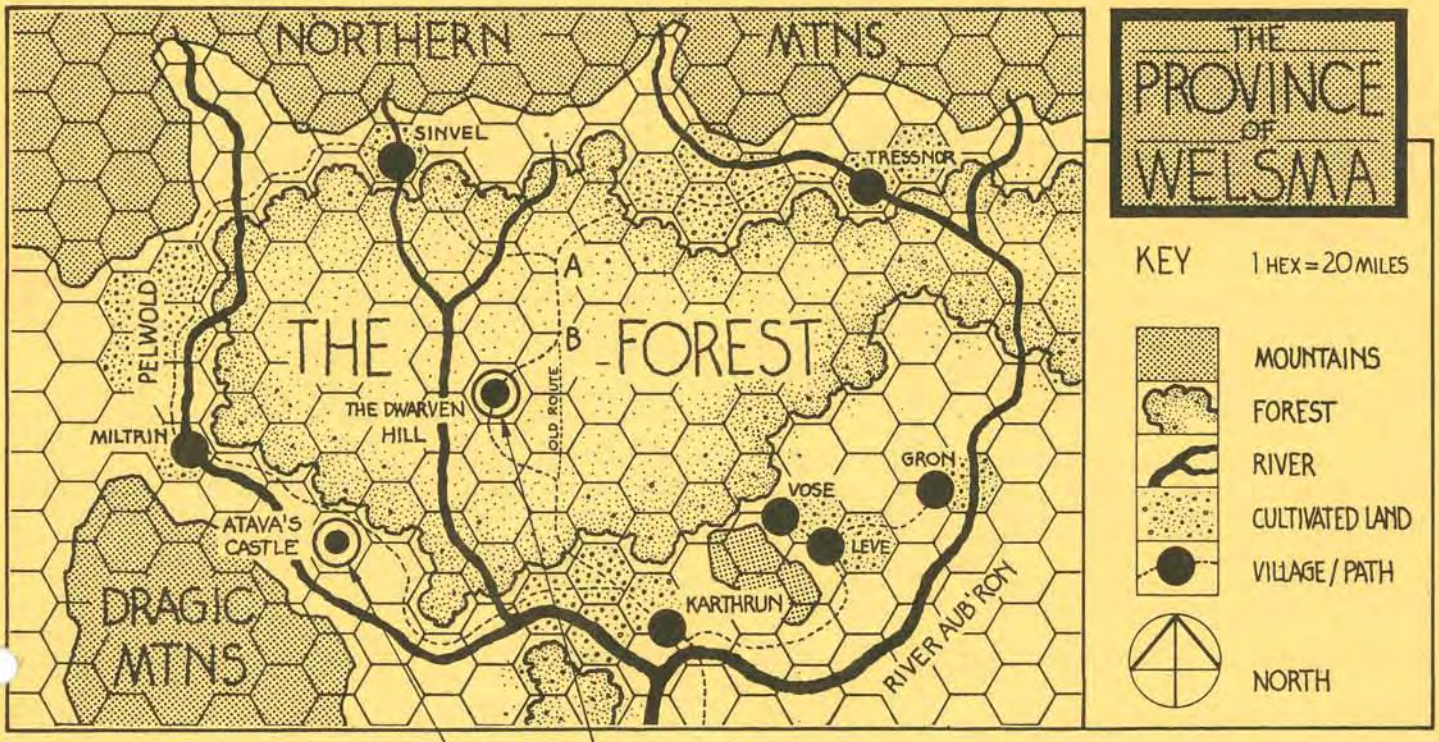
The chambers still in use are all clean and tidy, but sparsely furnished. The only exception to this is the Temple, which is magnificently appointed and decorated with gold fittings (worth 20,000gp in total). The embalmed body of the cleric sits upon a throne of black marble, hands raised as though in benediction. The body is wearing typical Miltrin clerical garb, and a collar of amethysts worth 7,500gp.

According to the tenets of their faith, the dwarves are not supposed to have treasure. However, dwarven nature being what it is, all have managed to gather a few precious items (typically 1-8 gems worth 100-1000gp each). Remarkably, each dwarf assumes that he is the only one who has broken the faith in this way, and all, with what is assumed to be great originality, have hidden their treasure in their mattresses.

The unused dormitories have been closed since the community shrank to its present size, and are now covered in dust and debris. The cavern and tunnels on the lower level are also in a state of neglect. The dwarves' workshops are in a state of 'organised untidiness', with tools for metalworking (including armour and weaponry), jewellery and stone work, lapidary equipment, forges and ingots piled in apparently random order. A search will reveal 1-10 gems (worth 100-1000gp each) and 2-5 heavy ingots of precious metals (worth 1200gp each) in each workshop. The mine workings and the mining equipment store are places of supreme order, with a place for everything, and everything in its place.

If the dwarves are defeated, or their Temple is destroyed, the survivors will overcome their distrust of trees and flee into the Forest. Any prisoners will relate the history of the settlement, including Miltrin's involvement, and then ask to be allowed to return to their homelands in the Dragic Mountains. Those dwarves who have fled will also make for the mountains, either singly or in small groups. The bandits will retreat into the depths of the Forest to re-think their strategy — a process which removes them as a threat for several months.

If the adventurers are taken captive they will be turned over to the bandits with all their equipment, but only after Wizened Ape has taken any magic items that they possess. He will also bore any cleric among


NORTHERN MTNS
SINVEL
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THE FOREST
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PELWOLD
THE DWARVEN HILL
MILTRIN
ATAVA'S CASTLE
GRON
VOSE
LEVE
KARTHRUN
RIVER AUB'RON
DRAGIC MTNS
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FOREST
RIVER
CULTIVATED LAND
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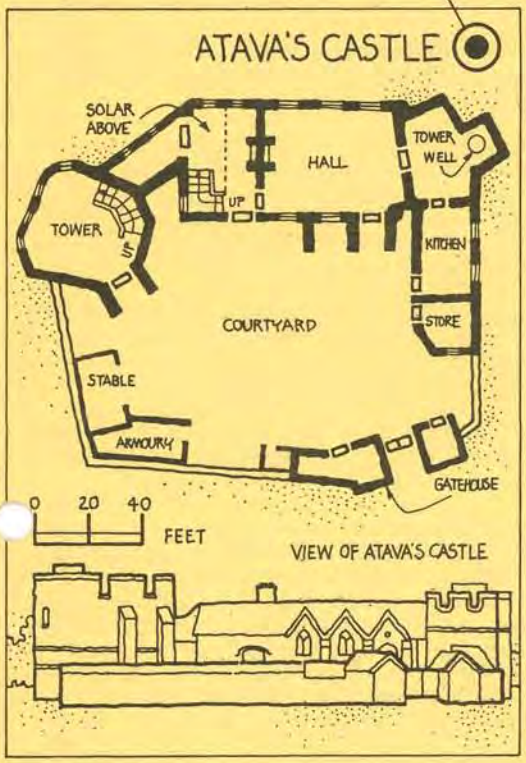
ATAVA'S CASTLE
SOLAR ABOVE
HALL
TOWER WELL
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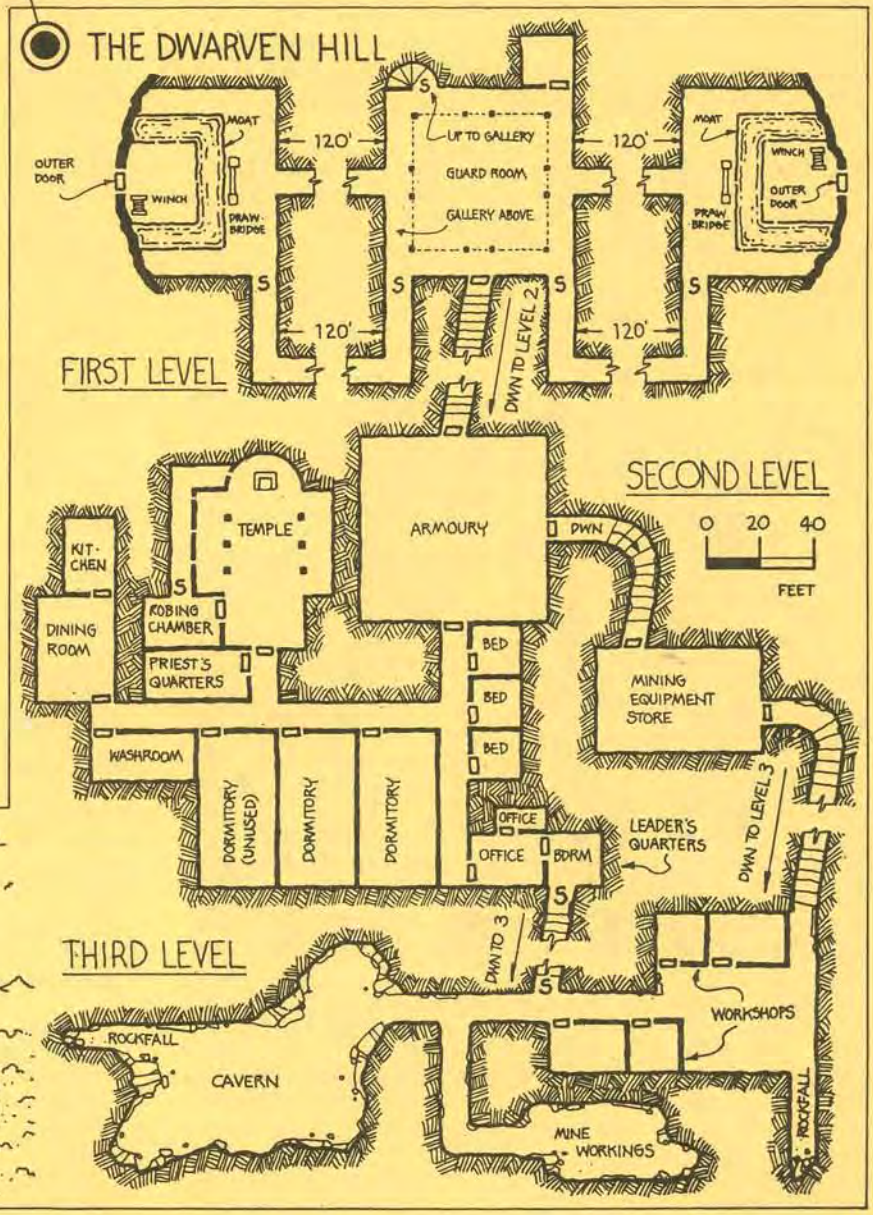
0 20 40
FEET
VIEW OF ATAVA'S CASTLE


THE DWARVEN HILL
OUTER DOOR
MOAT
WINCH
DRAW BRIDGE
120'
UP TO GALLERY
GUARD ROOM
GALLERY ABOVE
DWN TO LEVEL 2
FIRST LEVEL
SECOND LEVEL
TEMPLE
ARMOURY
DWN
KITCHEN
DINING ROOM
ROBING CHAMBER
PRIEST'S QUARTERS
BED
WASHROOM
DORMITORY (UNUSED)
DORMITORY
OFFICE
BDRM
MINING EQUIPMENT STORE
LEADER'S QUARTERS
DWN TO LEVEL 3
DWN TO 3
THIRD LEVEL
ROCKFALL
CAVERN
WORKSHOPS
MINE WORKINGS
0 20 40
FEET

KEY
DOOR
SECRET DOOR
STAIRS
NORTH

VIEW OF DWARVEN HILL
OUTER DOOR

the adventurers nigh-unto-death with spurious theological debates before they are given to the bandits. Whether escape is possible (and deserved) is left to the DM's discretion.

The Journey Onwards

After the encounters with the bandits and their dwarven allies, the adventurers should press on with the second part of their mission — the rescue of the Invoker. Although it is possible for them to travel across the Forest in a south-westerly direction, it will be easier and quicker to follow the bridleway towards Karthrun and then turn back towards Miltrin.

At the other end of its diverted section the bridleway's original route is blocked by a similar barricade of logs and uprooted undergrowth. This barrier is unmanned, although the party will still be under observation by the bandits. As above, the adventurers may spot one of these watchers disappearing into the undergrowth some distance away. The bandits will not attack again.

Once out of the Great Forest, progress becomes much easier, and movement will be at normal speed. The road between Miltrin and Karthrun is unusually fine, and movement will be at 1 ½ times normal. The road is patrolled for 20 miles beyond the junction with the bridleway by detachments of Karthrun Light Cavalry (see below for a typical patrol group). The adventurers will encounter at least one of these patrols, and, providing they are polite and apparently honest, all should be well.

Sergeant: AC 6; Fighter 4; hp 18; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as F4; M 9; AL N; xp 75; longsword, light crossbow, mounted on a warhorse.
15 troopers: AC 6; Fighter 3; hp 14; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as F3; M 9; AL N; xp 50; longswords, spears used as lances, light crossbows, mounted on warhorses.

All patrols will make a point of warning the adventurers to be careful in Miltrin territory, 'because of the uncivil and brutal inhabitants'.

A further twenty miles along, the adventurers will encounter at least one Miltrin road patrol, of a similar composition to those above. Apart from the Miltrin livery, the patrol is equipped in an identical fashion to the Karthrun Light Cavalry. These troops will also allow the adventurers to pass if they are polite — they are not Karthrun citizens and Sinvel citizens are not expected on this particular road. The sergeant leading the patrol will make a point of congratulating the adventurers on their sense at leaving the 'brutal and uncivil lands of Karthrun.'

Lord Atava's Castle

Lord Atava's Castle is not the strong prison that the adventurers may have been expecting, but a fortified manor house that Atava uses as a hunting lodge and training establishment for his personal troops.

The Grand Council recognised that the Invoker was an important prisoner that a normal prison simply could not hold. When the Invoker was captured he was kept awake for days while the Grand Council summoned a wizard to cast a variety of **feeblemind** spell upon him. In his weakened and exhausted state the Invoker could not resist the power of the spell and was reduced to a drooling simpleton. In this state no prison bars were necessary to hold him, and the Invoker was given over to one of the Council members, Lord Atava, for safe-keeping. Lord Atava sent the Invoker south to his hunting lodge and, with a touch of irony, gave orders that he was to be employed as a kitchen scullion — a job where his lately acquired lack of wit would not be a handicap.

This is a deliberate move on the part of the Grand Council of Miltrin — they want the Invoker to be rescued; he would never agree to any of their demands, never turn traitor to Sinvel, and would be a constantly dangerous prisoner. The Grand Council had several options open to it. They could kill the Invoker out of hand, but Sinvel reaction to this would be unpredictable. They could keep him prisoner, but the costs of guarding him constantly against escape or rescue would be high — including the expense of a wizard to renew the spell should it ever fail. The Grand Council soon realised that the the Invoker would be located sooner or later, and a rescue attempted.

The Grand Council have decided to make any rescue as easy as possible — without seeming too easy — in an effort to be seen as injured parties in the war they wish to start. Any incursion by Sinvel forces — and the adventurers are Sinvel forces — will be treated as an act of war. Miltrin public opinion will be manipulated into seeing this as the final provocation, allowing the Grand Council to move against Sinvel while the barbarians provide a splendid diversion. It is even thought possible that Karthrun might not intervene in a 'just' war where Miltrin could claim to be the offended party.

Lord Atava has ensured that the forces at the hunting lodge are just credible as a guard for such a prisoner, while not being too powerful. In addition, the Miltrin road patrols have been given orders not to interfere with any group heading towards Karthrun. Lord Atava himself is in the city of Miltrin, gathering his feudal troops for the assault against Sinvel. If the adventurers choose to storm the castle, the garrison will defend it to the best of their ability. The other inhabitants of the castle — including the Invoker — will seek whatever safety they can find in the keep and the great hall and take no part in any battle. They are all treated as normal men, without any special abilities.

If the adventurers approach the castle in a peaceful manner they will be invited within its walls to meet the Castellan. He will ask if they are skilled fighters. If any of the adventurers admit to being such, he will declare a tournament for the next day, and invite the adventurers to take part. If they refuse, it will be made clear that they are not welcome. If they accept, the Castellan will hold a banquet in their honour.

The next morning the tournament will be held in the courtyard, a field list contest. Teams of equal numbers are matched in small melees, the winning team being the last one to have any unwounded members. Real weapons are used, but because it is a 'friendly' match, a wounded participant must withdraw from the fight. Fighters among the adventurers are treated as a single team, and the squires (and their masters) among the garrison are apportioned into similar sized units. Wounded characters will be treated by the castle's chaplain.

While they are guests within the castle, the adventurers will be accompanied by one of the masters-at-arms at all times, although this will not be as an obvious 'watchdog.' They will be expected to hand over any arms they have (all the characters will be allowed to keep a dagger or the equivalent) into the armoury, and house any horses within the stable block. The castle has no dungeons as such, and it will be regarded as rather odd if the adventurers tour the servants' quarters, but there is a 25% chance that one of the adventurers will notice that one of the kitchen scullions looks suspiciously like the Invoker.

The Invoker works and sleeps within the castle kitchen, turning the roasting spit before the main fire. He will be wary of the adventurers and will not talk to them. Unless the adventurers treat him in a kindly manner he will not accompany them when they try to rescue him, but will raise the alarm by crying out in fear. This is especially true if the adventurers approach him at night. An elf or magic user will recognise that the Invoker is ensorcelled by a **feeblemind** spell. The castle garrison are under orders not to interfere in any rescue attempt and, although they will behave as though suspicious of the adventurers' intentions will leave them alone.

No matter what plan the adventurers arrive at for rescuing the Invoker, it will succeed. The garrison are under orders to allow it to do so, although a group of cavalry (statistics identical to the road patrol given above) will pursue the adventurers in a half-hearted way. They will not catch them unless the adventurers stop and fight.

The castellan: AC 3; Fighter 8; hp 38; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as F8; M 10; AL N; xp 650; ceremonial bastard sword.

The chaplain: AC 4; Cleric 6; hp 24; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1; D 1-6 (mace); Save as C6; M 6; AL N; xp 500; **cure light wounds** (x2), **bless, hold person, striking**.
5 masters-at-arms: AC 2; Fighter 7; hp 40; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as F7; M 11; AL N; xp 450; longswords, daggers, axes.
20 squires: AC 2; Fighter 4; hp 20; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as F4; M 11; AL N; xp 75; longswords, daggers, axes.
5 sergeants: AC 6; Fighter 4; hp 18; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as F4; M 9; AL N; xp 75; longswords, light crossbows.
45 troopers: AC 6; Fighter 3; hp 14; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as F3; M 9; AL N; xp 50; longswords, spears, light crossbows.

There are sufficient horses in the castle stables and the surrounding fields to mount the entire garrison.

Meanwhile, Back At The War....

Once freed, the Invoker must be the recipient of a **dispel magic** or a **cureall** spell before he is returned to his former self. When this is done, the Invoker will not remember any of his spells, but with a period of meditation and rest — and some decent food — he will be able to cast spells again. When he does regain his spells, he will heal all the adventurers who have suffered wounds in rescuing him — up to using a **cureall** spell on anyone who suffered wounds at the jaws of the werewolf with the bandits.

The Invoker will not offer any suggestions as to what the group's course of action should be now, except that help should be found quickly. He is out of touch with what has been happening, and he will be very distressed when he learns of the barbarians who are attacking Sinvel.

The Invoker: AC 9; Cleric 22; hp 60; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as C22; M 10; AL L; xp not applicable; S 13, I 2(15) W 18, D 14, C 12, Ch 16; No spells initially, DM should determine most logical selection based on current circumstances.

The final outcome of this adventure depends entirely upon the speed with which the party has acted up to this point, and upon the choice of action now. It is recommended that the DM allow the party a reasonable amount of time to complete the mission and return for a final confrontation, although indecision and foolishness should tilt the balance increasingly against the adventurers.

If they head for Sinvel, they will not be bothered by the bandits in the Great Forest or by Miltrin forces (providing the Invoker is disguised). However, when they reach Sinvel they will find it besieged by the barbarian horde. The choice will then fall between an attempt to deal with the situation directly, and a retreat to find help from Karthrun. If the adventurers try to break into Sinvel, the Invoker will aid them, but he will not be a party to foolish efforts to attack the barbarians. If the party persists, the likely outcome will be the death or capture of the adventurers, and the flaunting of the body of the Invoker before the gates. Should they manage to break in, the DM must decide whether to stage-manage the last-minute arrival of the forces of Karthrun, or an Alamo-style siege, where the adventurers face the collapse of the city's defences, and the tide of enemy warriors.

If the adventurers decide to head for Karthrun, the Invoker will appraise the first encountered patrol of his true identity and demand to see the general in charge of the area. The Karthrun troops will react with scepticism, but will escort the group to meet their leader, at a border encampment some 25 miles from Karthrun — after confiscating any weapons that the adventurers are carrying. The commander of the Karthrun field force in this area, General Garla, has met the Invoker and will listen to anything that he is told with a sympathetic ear.

He will then send a message requesting orders to the Tyrant's Citadel, and invite the Invoker to be his guest while they await a reply. Within 4 hours, the messenger returns, bearing orders for an immediate advance. Garla is to take his army (see below) through Miltrin territory — giving battle to any who oppose him on the way — and go to the aid of the Sinvel. The Invoker and the adventurers are to accompany the army back to Sinvel, but they will not be given command of any of its elements. The adventurers may travel with — and fight beside — any of the units that make up the Karthrun field force.

After two days march into Miltrin territory, the first opposition will be encountered. Forward patrols of Hennish cavalry will report a large body of troops moving to intercept the Karthrun column.

This force is Lord Atava and his feudal levies, who have been re-assigned by the Grand Council to meet this new threat rather than advance upon Sinvel. The Karthrun forces will advance to meet this feudal force and, after social niceties have been exchanged by the armies' heralds, the battle will be arranged for the following morning.

Each unit in each army should be treated as a separate force (as defined in the War Machine rules) for this battle. The DM decides how the Miltrin army is drawn up for battle, and the players do the same for the Karthrun army. Once the dispositions of the two sides have been made, opposing forces fight each other (a force on the right flank of the Karthrun army fights a force on the left flank of the Miltrin army, and so on). This process is repeated until only one army occupies the field of battle — or until Lord Atava loses his nerve and orders a retreat (when the Miltrin army has suffered four force defeats).

If the Karthrun army does not hold the field at the end of the battle, Garla will regroup his army and try again on the following day.

If the Karthrun army is victorious, it will loot the field of anything of value. The adventurers may gain up to 1000gp worth of armour and weaponry if they take part in the battle or the looting. The Grand Council of Miltrin will have a change of heart and will recall Atava in disgrace. The Karthrun advance will be unopposed from then on.

Regardless of the outcome, the DM should note any casualties among the Karthrun units — and among the Miltrin units if a second round of battle or another battle has to be fought.

Once the Karthrun army arrives at Sinvel they will find that the city is surrounded by a horde of barbarians. The condition of the city and its defenders will depend on how long it took the adventurers to bring the army of Karthrun here. The DM should reduce the size of the garrison if they were slow in rescuing the Invoker, or if they only went off to fetch the relieving army after visiting Sinvel. The battle before the gates of the city follows a similar procedure to the battle above. This time the DM determines the disposition of the barbarian clans and the players determine the dispositions of the joint Karthrun/Sinvel army forces. The barbarians will not commit their whole force to battle on the first day — spare clans are held in reserve as they try to maintain the siege. In this battle the player characters may join and lead any Sinvel units, but only after one round of battle has already been fought.

If the barbarians are forced from the field they will wait for two days and then attack again. If they win this battle or the next one, they will sack Sinvel and head for Miltrin.

The adventurers will only receive rewards if the defence of the city of Sinvel is successful. Substantial grants of land and wealth will be made to the Marchioness of Tressnor, and she — or her heirs — will pass some of these on to the player characters. Naturally, the amounts involved depend upon the actions of the adventurers; the longer they took, the greater the losses to Sinvel will have been, and the cash reward will be reduced (although there may be more land available!). Additionally, if the Karthrun forces were much reduced by the expedition, they will receive more of the rewards, and less will be available to the player characters. However, the Invoker will prove to be a great friend and benefactor in the future, and the adventurers will be assured of good relations with the Elders of Sinvel, and with the Marchioness from that day forth. And when Sinvel feels strong enough to tackle the problem of the bandits, or to provoke some trouble with Miltrin, guess who will be the first people the Elders turn to....

The Forces

The Army of Sinvel

The Citizens Militia
Battle Rating: 23
Troop Class: Poor
No. of Troops: 1500 townspeople

Sinvel Rabble-at-arms
Battle Rating: 19
Troop Class: Poor
No. of Troops: 2500 peasants

The Monastic Order of Warriors
Battle Rating: 125
Troop Class: Excellent
No. of Troops: 120 heavy infantry
Notes: If a third round of battle is fought, the Invoker will lead this unit. Increase its Battle Rating by 16 if he does lead the unit.

Tressnor Feudal Infantry
Battle Rating: 118
Troop Class: Good
No. of Troops: 400 mounted infantry
Notes: The Marchioness of Tressnor leads this unit. It will be augmented by the players' own forces, if such exist.

The City Guard
Battle Rating: 126
Troop Class: Good
No. of Troops: 250 heavy cavalry

The Guildmasters' Guard
Battle Rating: 184
Troop Class: Elite
No. of Troops: 40 superheavy cavalrymen

The Barbarian Horde

Forces within the barbarian army are given as several units of equal power. The DM should keep a separate record of each clan's casualties as the battle progresses. The Battle Ratings do not reflect individual prowess, but the ability of the barbarians to fight as organised forces. Clans are named for animals, the clan chief or a clan symbol.

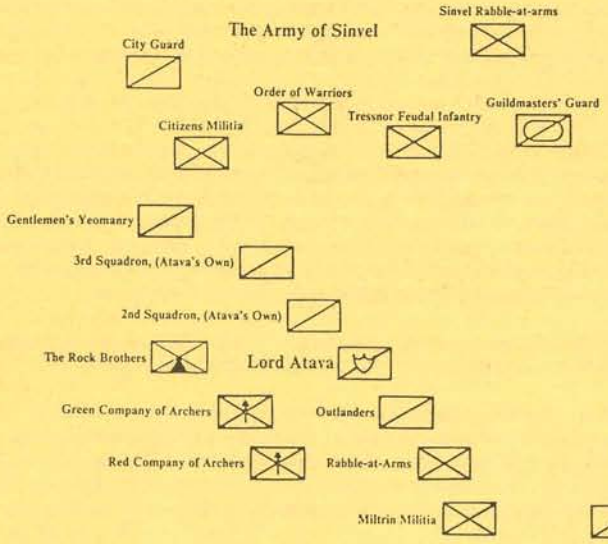
5 Clan Units: Eagle, Boar, Wolf, Hawk, Running Man
Battle Rating: 56
Troop Class: Fair
No. of Troops: 400 light infantry

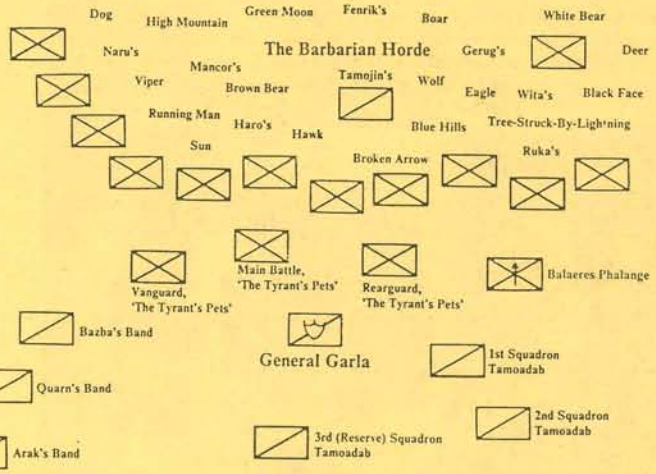
7 Clan Units: Broken Arrow, Black Face, Brown Bear, Viper, Naru's, Fenrik's, High Mountain
Battle Rating: 50
Troop Class: Below Average
No. of Troops: 1200 mounted infantry

3 Clan Units: Dog, Green Moon, Ruka's
Battle Rating: 35
Troop Class: Poor
No. of Troops: 1500 infantry

9 Clan Units: Sun, Wita's, Blue Hills, Deer, White Bear, Gerug's, Mancor's, Tree-Struck-By-Lightning, Haro's
Battle Rating: 53
Troop Class: Fair
No. of Troops: 750 infantry

1 Clan Unit: Tamojin's
Battle Rating: 93
Troop Class: Good
No. of Troops: 300 medium cavalry
Notes: The commander of the horde accompanies this unit, and if it is routed the rest of the horde will suffer a penalty of -15 to their BR. As no other chieftain follows orders anyway, this unit may be put anywhere in the battleline.





Lord Atava's Field Army

1st Squadron, (Atava's Own) Miltrin Cavalry
Battle Rating: 90
Troop Class: Average
No. of Troops: 200 heavy cavalrymen
Notes: Lord Atava accompanies this unit, so it must be placed at — or near — the centre of any battle line.

2nd Squadron, (Atava's Own) Miltrin Cavalry
Battle Rating: 90
Troop Class: Average
No. of Troops: 200 men

3rd Squadron, (Atava's Own) Miltrin Cavalry
Battle Rating: 115
Troop Class: Average
No. of Troops: 200 heavy cavalrymen
Notes: If matched against the Independent Balaeres Phalange, this squadron receives a +10 bonus to its Battle Rating.

The Rock Brothers Mercenary Legion
Battle Rating: 115
Troop Class: Excellent
No. of Troops: 500 dwarves

The Red Company of Archers
Battle Rating: 110
Troop Class: Excellent
No. of Troops: 150 archers

The Green Company of Archers
Battle Rating: 112
Troop Class: Excellent
No. of Troops: 150 archers

Miltrin Rabble-at-Arms
Battle Rating: 25
Troop Class: Untrained
No. of Troops: 1000 peasants

Miltrin Militia
Battle Rating: 32
Troop Class: Poor
No. of Troops: 750 peasants

Outlanders' Cavalry
Battle Rating: 100
Troop Class: Good
No. of Troops: 100 medium and heavy cavalrymen

Young Gentlemen's Yeomanry of Miltrin
Battle Rating: 105
Troop Class: Good
No. of Troops: 100 medium cavalrymen
Notes: This unit is composed of 'young gentlemen' from Miltrin. They are touchy about their status and cannot be placed in a battle line next to peasantry or archers, nor will they do battle with any unit that is not mounted. Their BR will be +10 against any unit of Hennish horse.

General Garla's Karthrun Field Force

Vanguard, Karthrun 3rd Legion 'The Tyrant's Pets'
Battle Rating: 90
Troop Class: Good
No. of Troops: 500 infantrymen

Main Battle, Karthrun 3rd Legion 'The Tyrant's Pets'
Battle Rating: 90
Troop Class: Good
No. of Troops: 500 infantrymen

Rearguard, Karthrun 3rd Legion 'The Tyrant's Pets'
Battle Rating: 90
Troop Class: Good
No. of Troops: 500 infantrymen
NB: All units of the 3rd Legion receive +10 bonus to their Battle Rating when fighting Miltrin troops, reflecting the fact that they have fought — and beaten — them before.

1st Squadron Tamoadab Mercenary Cavalry
Battle Rating: 88
Troop Class: Average
No. of Troops: 100 cavalrymen

2nd Squadron Tamoadab Mercenary Cavalry
Battle Rating 100
Troop Class: Good
No. of Troops: 100 cavalrymen

3rd (Reserve) Squadron Tamoadab Mercenary Cavalry
Battle Rating: 70
Troop Class: Average
No. of Troops: 80 cavalrymen

The Independent Balaeres Phalange
Battle Rating: 70
Troop Class: Fair
No. of Troops: 200 javelinmen

Cataphracts 'Garla's Slayers'
Battle Rating: 140
Troop Class: Elite
No. of Troops: 200 extra-heavy cavalrymen
Notes: This is General Garla's bodyguard, and must be positioned near the centre of any battle line.

Arak's Band of Hennish Horse
Battle Rating: 100
Troop Class: Average
No. of Troops: 75 light horse archers

Bazba's Band of Hennish Horse
Battle Rating: 105
Troop Class: Average
No. of Troops: 75 light horse archers

Quarn's Band of Hennish Horse
Battle Rating: 101
Troop Class: Average
No. of Troops: 75 light horse archers

CREDITS: **Design: Doug Cowie** **Art: Dave Pearson** **Cartography: Paul Ruiz** **Barbarian Hordes and other bits: Mike Brunton**

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Role Playing for Remedials

by Alan Heaven

We've all met them: people who sneeringly condemn FRP games as addictive escapism of no practical use. But things are changing.

All secondary schools are required to have a remedial department to help slow learners primarily with English and maths, and many already have one, usually with about 8 - 10 pupils per sub year. Perhaps in this expanding area of education we can begin to demonstrate how FRP games can usefully be employed to practical ends.

The difficulty which many pupils face is not an inherent inability to learn, but a lack of motivation. Others have been conditioned so that the prospect of reading, for example, genuinely creates an adverse response. This is where FRP games can be most valuable.

Ask yourself what makes them so enjoyable and words such as 'exciting', 'involving', 'challenging' may spring to mind. These are the very aspects which can be used to overcome a pupil's initial unenthusiastic responses to reading and to replace them with interest, because the motivation is the game itself and the reading an integral part of it.

Each pupil could have a sheet with details of character, spells, background, etc which would have to be read and understood in order to take part. This might have little appeal on its own, but when they see just how fundamental this information is to survival and how much better the game becomes with it, then they are becoming motivated to read for pleasureable purposes and will continue to do so as the game develops.

Learning and enjoying to read and write can become woven into the game in many ways. Reading skills could be improved by an increased use of visual aids representing signs and scrolls which have to be understood; problems can be incorporated into the scenario (*'door opens only if you press correct spelling'*), even conversational monsters who use new words or ask riddles. The possibilities are endless.

Arithmetical ability can be constantly tested by the use of dice and calculations, although these can be made easier according to which FRP game is chosen. Arithmetical traps, problems and challenges are easily arranged and could increase in difficulty the further the players penetrate into the scenario.

Similarly, there could be magical barriers which can only be removed by the correct pronunciation of certain words inscribed nearby; scrolls which combine to make a sum whose answer leads to another clue; and, naturally, the usual magical parchment and ancient tomes. It is not difficult to bring together the disparate worlds of school and fantasy successfully and interestingly.

Probably without realising it, anyone who takes part in an FRP game, planned and controlled by an omniscient referee, is actually following a crude pattern of 'discovery learning' in which they find the best tactics to use by a trial and error method (should a door be kicked open, listened at or tested?) and adjust their behaviour accordingly. So why not develop this ready-made learning medium and introduce other forms of learning as well?

But don't think this is a corruption of the game. The whole point of choosing FRP games such as **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS** is because the spirit of intense involvement, concentration, enjoyment and co-operation displayed by a group of people is something rarely seen outside of sport. Certainly I am advocating some fundamental changes in the name of education, yet this would be infeasible if the game system were not already sufficiently flexible to allow them and if the essential spirit of the game did not remain.

Anyway, one of the most exciting aspects is the role-playing itself!

Not only does the role-playing deepen the individual's involvement in the game, it has the potential to aid learning. It's amazing how personalities can change: pupils who have difficulty in working things out mentally without materials to use, or who simply find it hard to express themselves, can become quite different if allowed to play at being a high priestess or a wizard, for they rid themselves of any inhibitions and, above all, discuss situations rationally, coherently and in character, being totally absorbed into this imaginary world.

But fruitful discussion needs exact expression and the players need to be very precise about what they are doing. Vague comments like "we're going past the dragon" are of little use. The teacher can easily manoeuvre the pupils into a situation in which correct expression is very important. There, motivated by the urge both for their character to survive and to be useful in the eyes of their comrades, each student should quickly learn what is required of him or her.

The value of this to everyday life as well as to all school work is self-evident, especially when it can help a child towards a CSE English oral exam.

Of course, these games are also creatively stimulating, for they encourage the use of the imagination and there are many resources which can be used to continue the interest and motivation into other fields. Fantasy novels, for example, or essays on the themes of co-operation, war, violence, prejudice, etc, all of which may occur during a game.

There is a place for FRP games in remedial education, as a back-up activity supplementing normal lessons, but mainly as a focal point for a series of useful lessons related to both English and Mathematics departments, covering creativity, language and basic reading and arithmetic skills which can be adapted to suit the needs of any group of pupils. With these games the teacher can explore new ways of motivating the group and of stimulating the learning process.

If you're still at school, get your teachers to buy this magazine. Who knows, one day we may see the **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS** game on the timetable...

Alan Heaven

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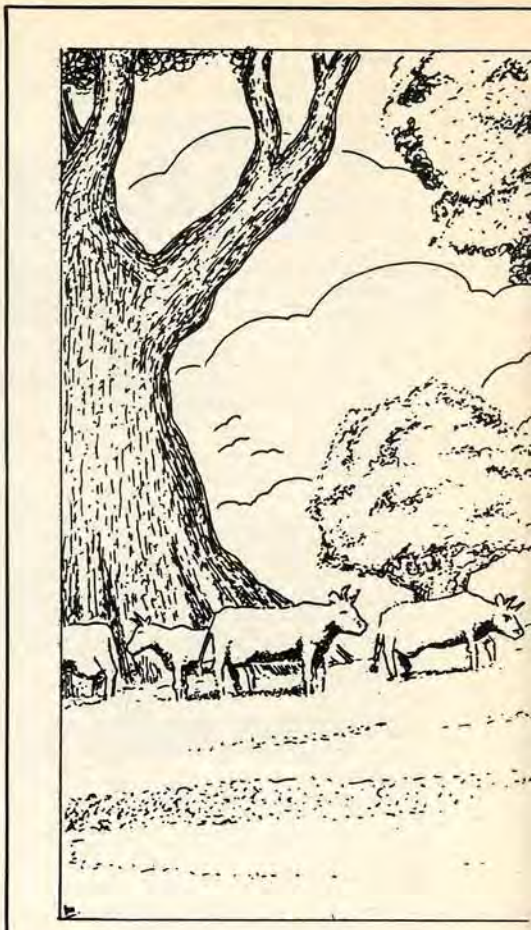
TOWARDS SYSTEMLESS SCENARIOS

An article on RPG scenario writing

by Pete Tamlyn



One of the most frequent complaints directed by outsiders at role-playing magazines concerns the vast amount of space taken up by scenarios, much of which seems to be statistics for the various monsters and NPCs involved.

More remarkably, role-players themselves can also be heard complaining about the statistics in scenarios, not because they are there, but because they are for the wrong game system. The same can equally be said of the many new monsters, magic items and so on with which some magazines tend to fill their pages. It is not surprising, therefore, that there is much debate in the Hobby as to what to do about all these statistics.

One of the responses has been for some fanzines, notably the late, lamented **DragonLords**, to print scenarios with statistics for more than one game system. Were this done with the object of encouraging people to think about how game mechanics are used, or to investigate lesser known systems then it might be worthwhile, but in practice it has simply been used as an attempt to keep both **AD&D** and **RuneQuest** camps happy. An attempt which, by and large, has failed as the partisans of either side still complain about the unwanted material and the neutrals, who would convert the scenario to their own favourite system anyway, complain about the even greater waste of space. Multi-system scenarios, it seems, lose out all round.

Another approach, and one which has been used in **IMAGINE**™ magazine, is to present the scenario in terms of one game system and follow it with a short series of notes on converting it to other systems. This idea shows promise in that the notes for the secondary system(s) do not list all of the statistics, but simply explain how to convert from one system to another. But this does assume that any GMs doing the conversion know their own game system reasonably well. If this is the case, why can it not be assumed that, given a basic plot, any GM will be able to implement it in their own favourite system. Then we can have scenarios without any statistics in them at all.

Now let me say right away that I realise this will upset the partisans even more because then they will have to do some conversion work instead of having everything handed to them on a plate. There will always be a market for straightforward AD&D compatible material, for example, and someone will always come forward to fulfil that demand. However, if it is possible to have systemless scenarios published, why can we not have a few more? Fanzines could thus save some pages and make less of a loss, and professional magazines could include more material and appear less daunting to casual readers. Besides, I believe there are a number of interesting advantages in having scenarios written without reference to any particular game system, not all of which are concerned simply with saving space in magazines.

The first argument which can be advanced is that what is really important about a scenario is the plot. Anyone can take an idea and fill in the necessary numbers to make it work in a given game system, but how many of us can write entertaining and bug-free story lines? In a systemless scenario the plot is laid bare to scrutiny which makes it easy for the reader to pick out the interesting bits and easier for both reader and writer to spot any inconsistencies. Not having to worry about rolling everything up and making sure you are conforming to the rules of the system you are writing for gives you a lot more time in which to concentrate on what is going to happen in the game. Hopefully this will mean fewer published scenarios where you get halfway through reading and suddenly think, "Hey, what if the players do...".

Writing a scenario from a systemless point of view also helps with getting the balance right. If you are writing for a specific system it is very tempting simply to pick something interesting out of a list of monsters without thinking too deeply about how much of a challenge it will provide for the party. With no system to write within, however, you will probably design your monster around the needs of the encounter as much as the other way round. This means choosing something appropriate to the environment in which the monster is found, perhaps creating something new with special talents, and most importantly, working out how tough the monster should be in relation to the party (by the way, my apologies to SF, Superhero and other non-fantasy addicts for the use of fantasy terminology — please substitute 'alien', 'villain' or whatever for 'monster' where appropriate).

Notice how I am emphasising that the scenario be written as systemless from the outset. This is deliberate, as one of the principal criticisms levelled at many of those systemless scenarios which have appeared in fanzines is that they are simply AD&D or RuneQuest with the names of the monsters changed. Now, there is no doubt that the sort of world the writer has in mind will affect the end product (I am a firm believer in the dictum that the mechanics of a game should be tailored to fit the world in which it is being run), but writing a scenario in a given system and then de-systemising it defeats the entire object, or at least the objects listed above. In fact I would prefer that all scenarios be written systemless initially. That way the system-specific scenario will also benefit from the advantages outlined above. In addition it may lead to all scenarios being presented as systemless plots, followed by notes on how to implement them in one or more game systems which, even if it did still mean the inclusion of a fair amount of statistics, would at least make it easy for the casual reader to get something useful out of the article.

As an example of how such scenarios could be presented, opposite you will find *The Stolen Herd*, a Celtic-flavour story.

THE STOLEN HERD

A systemless scenario with a Celtic background

This scenario was originally written for my own Celtic campaign, **Inis Fail**. There are no details of game mechanics given, partly because I do not want the players getting to know the rules and partly because they only amount to about three pages of A4, the rest being made up on the spot as expeditions progress. However, the scenario does have a strongly Celtic feel and this should be borne in mind if you are thinking of using it in an existing campaign.

The background to the scenario concerns a wager between two otherworldly beings: Maeglin, a woman of the Tuatha de Danann, and Bregon, a Fomoire. In the original scenario the bet concerned a game of shinty which Bregon fixed by arranging for the hero Cu Chulainn to join the game at the last minute and win the game for the less able side. However, some other wager can easily be substituted, the only important points being that Maeglin was so sure of winning she bet her own daughter, Fand, on the outcome and lost her thanks to Bregon's trickery. Hoping to save the girl, Maeglin changed Fand into a ladybird, but she was accidently eaten by a cow and reborn as a calf the following spring. Bregon eventually found out what had happened and stole the herd of cows in order to discover which one was the girl. At this point the players get involved as the outraged farmer, Cet, demands the King send a group of warriors (the players) to get his herd back.

Some explanation of the powers of Bregon and Maeglin are in order. The Fomoire are a hideous race with but one eye, one arm and one leg in their natural form. All, however, have the ability to shape-change into something more combat-worthy. The forms they take are often equally hideous but fairly strong and often blessed with sharp claws, horns or wings. They are a marvellous excuse to use some of the more outrageous figures available. The de Danann, in contrast, are always beautifully formed but are comparatively feeble, prefering to fight by magical means wherever possible. They are masterful illusionists, but their magical creations are dispelled when touched by living beings so they must rely on stealth and cunning to win through.

To begin with the players know nothing of the reason for the theft of the herd. The King will advise them to visit a local wisewoman who lives in a nearby wood to gain information about Bregon. She will require some payment for her services and, if the players are unable or unwilling to pay in kind, will ask them to fight a creature of her choice as entertainment. This task should not be made too difficult, but should be made to seem so to the players thus giving them the chance to display some true Celtic heroism. Once the payment has been made the wisewoman will inform the party that Bregon and his followers live in a lake beyond Cet's farm and warn them that the Fomoire leader cannot be killed while his feet are in water.

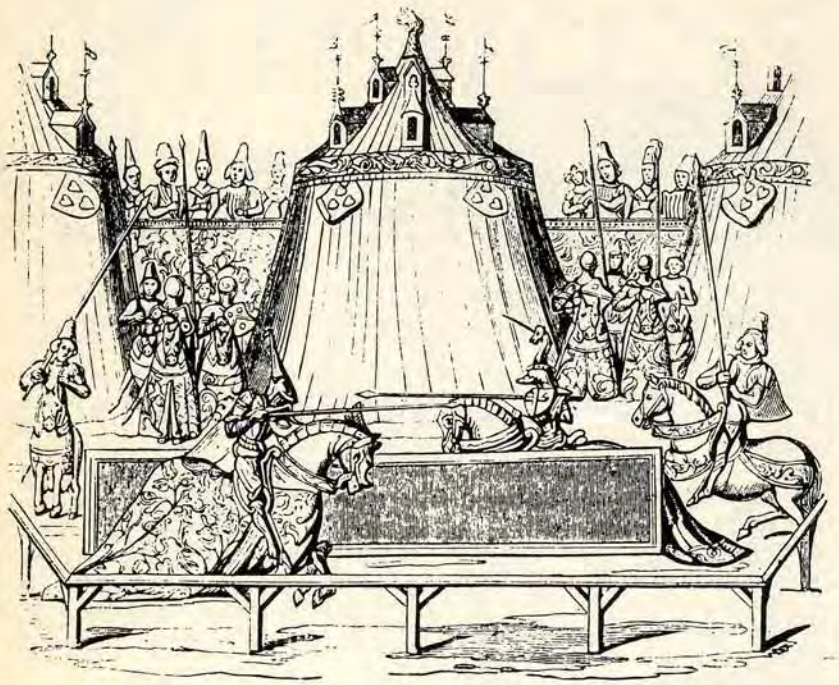
The lake is some distance away and Cet will offer the party lodging at his farm for the night. A boar hunt on the journey will provide some light relief on the way and an excuse for a feast on arrival. That night, one of the party will have a dream about a beautiful girl who turns into a calf. This is sent by Fand who wants to be rescued by a hero and will pick the most handsome of the party to receive the dream. The following day the party will head off for the lake. Maeglin will know of their quest and will try to aid them with her magic, but will remain hidden lest they learn the true reason for the theft and decide to hold the girl to ransom themselves. With the aid of the de Danann woman's illusions, the party should be able to creep up on the herd without alerting the Fomoire but in doing so will realise that magic is being used about them and should therefore suspect the presence of a de Danann. In addition, Bregon has a bull of his own in amongst the herd. This animal will not prove too much trouble for the party, but will create enough disturbance to alert Bregon and his fellow Fomoire. The number and ability of the Fomoire should be balanced against the party: their shape-shifted forms should all be different.

The exact outcome of the encounter will, of course, depend on how quickly the players find out what is going on. In the last resort they will be told by Bregon, either as an attempt to persuade the players not to go off with the herd or in trying to save his life, for according to Celtic law, the death of Bregon will not save Fand from her obligation to the Fomoire. Ideally the players should force Bregon to renounce his claim on the girl and they will be suitably rewarded by the de Danann if they do so. There is no other treasure — a Celtic warrior values his honour and skill in battle far above material wealth.

Pete Tamlyn

GAMES WITHOUT FRONTIERS: PART II

by Graeme Davis



Last issue, Graeme Davis described the advantages of being able to adapt adventures to different game systems. He provided an ingenious set of tables to facilitate this process, and showed how to calculate character attributes. This month he explains what to do about hit points, weapons & armour, and magic & psionics.

Hit Points

Hit points are probably the easiest part of a character to convert between systems. Simply:

1. Find a weapon which is common to both systems, such as a sword, dagger or club;

2. Calculate how many average hits with that weapon the character can withstand according to the first system;

3. Calculate the damage caused by that number of average hits with that weapon in the second system, and that is the number of hit points the converted character should have.

Example: a 5th level **AD&D** fighter has 37 hit points. In the AD&D game a longsword does 1-8 damage, giving an average of 4.5; thus the character can withstand $^{37}/_{4.5}$ = about 8 hits with a longsword in the AD&D game.

In **Bushido**, a longsword (katana) does 1d6+2 damage, giving an average of 5.5. 8 average hits therefore work out to 44 points of damage, so the character should have 44 hit points in Bushido.

Where the two systems share more than one weapon, the individual referee may like to work through the calculation a number of times for different weapons, for added precision. The results can sometimes vary quite considerably with the weapon used, reflecting the different 'strengths' accorded to various weapons in different games.

In some systems, such as **Traveller** and **Call of Cthulhu**, hit points are fixed, while in others, like **D&D**, AD&D and Bushido, they are improvable, presumably reflecting the improvement of defensive skills as the character progresses. There is no universal rule for dealing with this, but you should be guided by the notes in last month's instalment on fixed and improvable attributes.

In systems where hit points are derived directly from one or more attributes, the attribute scores can frequently be used as a guideline to check or substitute for the calculation given here.

Profession and Skills

The most basic distinction to be drawn between skill systems in most RPGs is between systems which use professions to give the character a ready-made 'package' of skills, like D&D, AD&D, and **T&T**, and those which allow for each skill to be acquired and improved separately, such as the **RuneQuest** family and Bushido. The easiest approach is to list all the skills (including weapon skills) available to the character, together with the chance of success for each in percentage terms, and match them up as closely as possible to skills available in the 'host' system. It may be necessary to define new skills or amend existing ones for a better 'fit', but discretion should always be used to avoid upsetting the balance of the host system.

Weapon skills are fairly simple; for example, a 3rd level AD&D fighter has a 65% chance (8+ on d20) of hitting an unarmoured target (always used unarmoured targets for this calculation to avoid problems arising from different treatments of armour). In RuneQuest this equates easily to a sword or other weapon attack of 65%, and in Bushido it equates to a BCS of 13, including appropriate level and profession modifiers. In Traveller it is best to work a little differently. A 65% chance of hitting means a 35% chance of missing; looking up 35% on the 2d6 table gives a result somewhere between 5 and 6. Let's be generous and call it 5. This gives our hero a roll of 5+ to hit, which compared to the basic 8+ to hit with any weapon might be taken to give him sword-3. However, a sword gets a +3 adjustment against no armour, leaving him with sword-0, which seems a little unfair, since as an experienced swordsman he ought to be better than these raygun cowboys when it comes to bladework. An alternative approach here might be to take the attack percentage of the AD&D Classic Man as a guideline. A level 0 character needs a roll of 11+ on 1d20 to hit AC 10 (50% chance), so our 3rd level fighter with his 65% chance is 15% better. Taking the roll of 5+ on 2d6 which we have already found is equivalent to sword-0 and consulting the probability table for 2d6, we find that the Traveller Classic Man has a 16.667% chance of missing. Therefore, a character who is 15% better with a sword should have only a 1.667% chance of missing, which the 2d6 table shows us is less than a roll of 2+. If our hero needs only 2+ to hit an unarmoured target, he must have sword-3, although since we have been dealing in the rather murky area of automatic hits the calculation becomes a little imprecise and it may be decided to give him sword-4.

Non-combat skills can be dealt with in much the same way. A 4th level AD&D thief with no race or attribute bonuses has the following abilities: Pick Pockets 40%, Open Locks 33%, Disarm Traps 30%, Move Silently 27%, Hide in Shadows 20%, Hear Noise 15%, Climb Walls 87% and Read Languages 20%.

These can be translated as they stand to a system like Call of Cthulhu, Disarm Traps becoming Mechanical Repair, Read Languages becoming Linguist (written languages only), and so on.

In a Gangbusters game, the same character would have Pickpocketing 40% and Lockpicking 33%, while Move Silently and Hide in Shadows are both covered by the Gangbusters Stealth skill, which

should be fixed at about 27%, since no skilled character has less than 26% under the Gangbusters rules. The Disarm Traps skill might be equated with Alarm Systems in Gangbusters at the referee's discretion, but care should be taken to avoid a character knowing too much about an alien environment.

It will never be possible to match all skills from one system precisely to another; you must adapt and improvise, and sometimes define new skills in the host system. In some cases, it may be appropriate to give a character certain skills in the host system which he/she did not possess in the donor system — if the example of the thief is adapted for Traveller for example, the Streetwise skill is an obvious choice, though this has no equivalent in the D&D game.

Weapons and Armour

Weapons are considerably easier to deal with, since they are a lot less complex — in every RPG system, a weapon is no more nor less than a device for reducing an opponent's hit points.

While a sword is a sword whether it features in D&D, Runequest, Bushido, Call of Cthulhu or Traveller, some weapons are unique to one system or milieu. Where possible, look for similar weapons in the host system — for example, the tomahawk in **Boot Hill** would be the hand axe in AD&D, and a blade in Traveller would be a large knife in Gangbusters or a butcher knife in Call of Cthulhu.

Where it is impossible to convert directly in this way, a weapon can be converted as follows:

1. Calculate the average damage done by the weapon in the 'donor' system;

2. Calculate the average hit points of the Classic Man in the 'donor' system;

3. Divide the first figure by the second;

4. Calculate the average hit points of the Classic Man in the 'host' system;

5. Multiply this by the result of step 3; the result is the *average* damage done by the weapon in the host system.

This is a variation on the procedure used for determining a character's hit points.
Example: While exploring an ancient castle in the Call of Cthulhu game, a character is forced to snatch up a morning star to fend off the approaching enemy.

1. In the AD&D game, a morning star does 2-8 damage against a man-sized opponent, so the average damage is $^{2+8}/_{2} = 5$;

2. The average hit points of the AD&D Classic Man (level 0 character) are $^{1+6}/_{2} = 3.5$;

3. $^{5}/_{3.5}$ = approx 1.43;

4. In Call of Cthulhu hit points are the average of CON (3d6) and SIZ (3d6); the average is 10.5;

5. 10.5 x 1.43 = approx 15, which is close to the average of 4d6. This makes a morning star a pretty devastating weapon in Call of Cthulhu — as effective as both barrels of a 12-bore — and you may decide to reduce this to, say, 3d6. On the other hand, in AD&D a morning star does the same damage as a broadsword and slightly more than a sabre, so you might decide to give it the same damage in Call of Cthulhu as a sabre, or slightly more (1d8+1 or 1d8+2).

Example 2: A fantasy campaign in a post-holocaust setting, such as Saberhagen's **The Empire of the East**, might include such items as laser rifles left behind by a past civilisation. To convert a laser rifle from Traveller to AD&D:

1. A Traveller laser rifle does 5d6 damage, average 17.5;

2. Wounds in Traveller reduce Strength, Dexterity or Endurance, the target being incapacitated when one characteristic is reduced to zero. For our purposes, it is easiest to take the average of one characteristic as the Classic Man's hit points. Since they are all generated on 2d6, we can take 7 as the average, ignoring mustering-out bonuses;

3. $^{17.5}/_{7} = 2.5$;

4. From the previous example, the AD&D classic man has 3.5 hit points;

5. 2.5 x 3.5 = 6.25, which is between the averages for 2d6 and 2d6-1.

Again, this may be altered slightly to make the laser rifle a more fearsome weapon if desired — at present it is less than half the strength of the weakest **lightning bolt** spell.

In some cases calculations of this nature may tell you more about the differences in emphasis between the two systems than about weapon damage; it is always worth doing the calculation as a base to work from, but be prepared to amend the results if necessary to preserve game balance and credibility.

In some cases, calculations may tell you more about the differences between the two games — be prepared to amend the results if necessary.

Armour is dealt with in one of two basic ways by most RPG systems. It will either reduce the probability of a hit (D&D, AD&D, Traveller, Bushido), or it will reduce the damage caused by a successful hit (Runequest, **The Fantasy Trip**). In most cases it should be fairly easy to equate armour types from one system to another, remembering that the more advanced armour types in SF RPGs will be superior to anything in a fantasy game.

When using armour in a system which normally makes no provision for it, such as Boot Hill or **Gangbusters**, it is possible to work out a means of dealing with armour by looking at the way armour is treated in the first system. In D&D and AD&D, for example, several armour types are listed, each type generally making the wearer 5% harder to hit than the type immediately inferior to it; this can be translated fairly painlessly into a series of attack modifiers for any assailant or defence modifiers for the wearer.

Example: A Boot Hill referee, having read some of Robert E Howard's fantasy Western stories, decides to enliven a campaign by introducing a lost valley in which an isolated community of Indians is ruled by a descendant of the Spanish Conquistadores. The referee decides that this character's Toledo breastplate and helmet gives him head and body protection equal to plate armour in AD&D. Consulting the AD&D rules we find that plate armour (AC 3) is seven 'pips' on a d20 (35%) harder to hit than no armour (AC 10), so that any hit to the head or body is subject to a 35% penalty to the hit determination roll. The referee may decide to reduce this protection when dealing with weapons which have a better penetration, such as carbines, and the Weapons/armour class table in the **AD&D Players Handbook** should provide food for thought here.

If RuneQuest, or some other game with a damage reduction armour system is being used as the reference point in the example above, the protection rating of the armour can be calculated in the same way use above for weapons — the fact that it stops damage rather than causing it makes no difference to the calculation.

Example: In a Gangbusters game, a mobster on the run attempts to disrupt pursuit by releasing a tiger from its cage in the city zoo. The referee decides to use the **AD&D Monster Manual** as a source, and gleans the following:

Attributes: not listed, but strength (Muscle) and Agility should be superior to that of most humans.

Hit points: 5d8+5, average 27.5

Attacks: Attack as 5+HD monster, 5+ on d20 (80% chance) to hit unarmoured target. Weapons are 2 fore-claws, 2-5 each, bite 1-10, and 2 rear claws 2-8 each if both foreclaws hit.

Skills: None listed, but tracking should be considered; difficult to surprise, quick reactions, reinforcing comments above on agility.

The tiger will attack as if fighting dirty with hand weapons, but the referee decides that the normal attack penalty for fighting dirty is not appropriate here. Strength does not affect combat ability, but agility will have to be estimated. The tiger's 80% hit probability in the AD&D game can be equated to a Gangbusters Agility score of 80.

The average 27.5 AD&D hit points equate to about 6 average hits with a sword. In the Hand Weapons table in the Gangbusters rules, a sword does +6 wound points in addition to the 1-6 basic damage points (1-5 according to Punching score, or 6 for fighting dirty). For the sake of convenience we will average these to give an average sword hit of 3.5+6 = 9.5. The tiger can withstand 6 average sword hits in AD&D, as we have seen, so its Gangbusters hit points will be 9.5 x 6 = 57, nearly five times as much as the average beginning character, which accords well with the 5 hit dice in AD&D.

The tiger's attacks can be treated as weapons. The two foreclaw attacks do 2-5 damage in AD&D falling somewhere between the damage ranges of a dagger (1-4) and a short sword (1-6), and on this basis the referee decides that they will count as a large knife (+5 wounds) for damage purposes. Similarly, the 1-10 bite damage is equivalent to a two-handed sword in AD&D, and the referee decides that since this has an average of 5.5 damage, more than the average damage of a sabre (4.5) or a broadsword (5.0), it should receive a +7 wound bonus, more than a sword's normal value in the Gangbusters game. Finally, the AD&D Monster Manual states that if both foreclaws hit successfully, the tiger may also rake with its rear claws for an additional 1-8 damage each. This is the same damage rating as a sabre or long-sword in AD&D, and so is given the same damage bonus as a sword in the Gangbusters game (+6 wounds).

As the tiger has no special skills, the conversion is now complete, so let's see what we have:

TIGER Ag 80, HP 57

Attack: as fistfighting, fighting dirty, no penalty to Ag check. May attack with both foreclaws and one bite in a single game turn; if both foreclaws hit successfully, may also attempt to rake with rear claws.
Weapons: 2 foreclaws, +5 wound.
1 bite, +7 wound.
2 rear claws, +6 wound.

If desired, the tiger's strength can be found now that its Agility and hit points are known, although this information is not strictly necessary.

All creatures may be treated in a similar way to this simple example. Any non-combat skills can be equated with skills from the host system, or new skills defined as necessary, according to the guidelines already given. Magical or psionic abilities can be treated as outlined in the appropriate section. Creatures which employ missile-weapon attacks, such as the tail spikes of a manticore or the venom of a spitting cobra, should use the gunfighting or thrown weapon rules where appropriate, instead of those for hand-to-hand combat.

Magic and Psionics

Magic appears in most fantasy role-playing games in two forms — spells and magical items. The spell-like abilities of some monsters can be treated as spells in most cases.

There are two main statistics to consider when converting a spell from one FRP system to another — the chance of success and the effect of the spell. Some games also use a spell point system, which will be considered later. The chance of success of a spell can normally be worked out in percentage terms and transferred fairly easily from one system to another. In some systems, like D&D, spells are assumed to be cast successfully 100% of the time, but the target is allowed a saving throw to avoid the full effects of the spell — in these cases, the chance of the victim failing the saving throw dictates the spell's chance of success. The saving throw of the Classic Man in one system should be equal to the spell's chance of success in another. Remember, though, that the effect of magic on game balance varies from system to system, and alter results if necessary to preserve the balance of the host system.

When the effect of a spell is to cause damage, the conversion should be carried out as if it were a weapon (see above). Otherwise, spell effects are usually self-explanatory, and can be converted with few problems. Details such as range, area of effect and duration should normally cause few problems.

Some systems use a spell point system to govern the extent of magic use available to the character, and where both systems involved in a conversion use such a system, spell points can be converted in the same way as an attribute — in some cases they may be derived from an attribute, such as constitution or will-power. Other systems, like D&D, use a 'level' system whereby the number and potency of spells available depend upon the character's level of advancement. When converting between these two types of system, problems can arise in determining the level or spell point cost of a given spell in the host system. It might be possible to draw up a table of spell level against spell point cost, based on identical or similar spells in each system, but since magic is such a crucial part of the game balance of any FRP system, it is probably best to proceed by instinct.

Converting spells for use in a non-magical RPG might present a few problems; in nearly all cases it is best to follow the magic system from the donor game as closely as possible. Saving throws, where necessary, can be derived with a reasonable amount of accuracy by reference to the classic man in both systems. In many systems, magic is treated as a special case of the spell system, and the notes already given under the skills heading may be of use.

The range of magical items available to FRP systems is vast, and many work so tightly within the limits of their own magic system that conversion can be difficult. For most purposes, they can be divided into four basic headings:

1. The first type of item modifies the attributes of the user, conferring additional strength, for example, or storing spell power. These can be converted from one system to another using the guidelines established for dealing with character attributes.

2. Other items produce spell-like effects, either duplicating a spell which

already exists in their native system or producing an effect which can be treated as such. These may be treated in the same way as spells above.

3. The third class modifies skills, sometimes conferring skills which the user need not originally have possessed. Magical weapons and armour might be seen as falling into this category, since they modify the attack and defence skills of the user. The effects of such items can be modified in the same way as the skills which they modify.

4. Lastly, there are items which give protection to the user. These will mostly fall into one of the three other categories — duplicating **protection** spells, for instance, or reducing the attack chance of an opponent, or modifying a saving throw or attribute check. Think carefully about the way in which an item functions before trying to convert it.

Some systems feature magical items with a fixed number of 'charges', while others assume that they have an unlimited power supply and last for ever. The way in which a particular system deals with this point will be an important element in its game balance, and when converting between two FRP systems you should bear in mind the approach of the host system; the precise number of charges in an item can be decided more or less by instinct if you are sufficiently familiar with both systems.

Psionics figure in a number of SF RPGs, and sometimes take the place of magic in a non-magical SF milieu. Where psionics appear, the systems which govern their use can be treated as a magic system for purposes of comparison and conversion. Conversely, too, a look at the magic system in a host FRPG will give valuable hints about handling introduced psionics.

Conclusion

It would be impossible to cover all the possibilities within the scope of a short series like this, and so the coverage of certain areas is necessarily a little sketchy. There are bound to be problems I have overlooked, and there are obviously a great many rules systems with which I am not familiar, but I hope that the general guidelines and suggestions I have given will be useful to anyone who is considering converting material between RPG systems for one reason or another, and was unsure as to how to go about it. My ideas and approaches are by no means the only ones, and I make no claims that they are right or best — they are simply suggestions, and any method is satisfactory provided that it produces something that is playable and believable and does not place too much strain on the mechanics of the 'host' system.

Graeme Davis

If you missed the first part of this article with the conversion tables, you can obtain a copy of issue 18 at a cost of £1 from TSR UK Ltd.

DISPEL CONFUSION

Role-playing games have complex rules that are open to interpretation, which can cause problems when two players interpret them differently. ***Dispel Confusion*** *is a column intended to help by providing answers to rules questions.*

At present we mainly answer questions about TSR games. While the answers we give are not fully 'official', we do have contact with the designers and a good deal of playing and refereeing experience.

An answer column needs questions, so send yours to:
Dispel Confusion, TSR UK Ltd, The Mill, Rathmore Road, CAMBRIDGE.
If you don't want to wait for your question to appear in the magazine, please enclose a 9" x 4" SSAE.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® and ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® games

Q. Can a troll use a crossbow? *(Basic)*

A. Given sufficient time to work out how a crossbow functions, a troll could use one. However, when using a crossbow a troll would have only one attack per round, which could cause up to six points of damage, instead of its three normal attacks causing up to 22 points of damage. Why it should want to do less damage to its opponent is open to question, except that it would be able to attack enemies at a distance.

Q. Does a thief's backstabbing bonus apply to missile fire from behind? *(Basic & Advanced)*

A. No. The attack is treated in the same manner as a rear missile attack by anyone else. A thief would not cause double damage with a missile attack from behind. The backstabbing attack of thieves can only be carried out with melee weapons, and represents a thief's ability to sneak up behind a potential victim and strike for maximum effect.

Q. If a magic user is hit by a missile or melee weapon, can he or she cast spells at the attacker? *(Basic & Advanced)*

A. The answer to this one depends on when the magic user was hit in relation to the process of casting the spell.

If a magic user is hit by a weapon, affected by an opponent's spell or jostled — in short, if his or her concentration is broken while in the process of casting a spell, then the spell is interrupted and does not 'go off' at the intended time. The rules are quite clear that the MU in question must stand still, concentrate on the spell, say the correct words, use the correct components (in the Advanced game) and make the right gestures. This process cannot be interrupted without spoiling the spell.

If a magic user is wounded and then, after the injury has been sustained, begins to cast a spell, the fact that the MU is hurt has no effect on the spell whatsoever. The MU is assumed to have sufficient discipline of mind to block out any pain for the time that it takes to cast the spell (after all, he or she must concentrate on the spell to the exclusion of all other activities anyway, and bleeding to death is just another activity).

Q. If a character already suffering from lycanthropy (after being attacked by, say, a were-bear) is badly wounded by another type of were-creature, what form will the disease take? *(Advanced)*

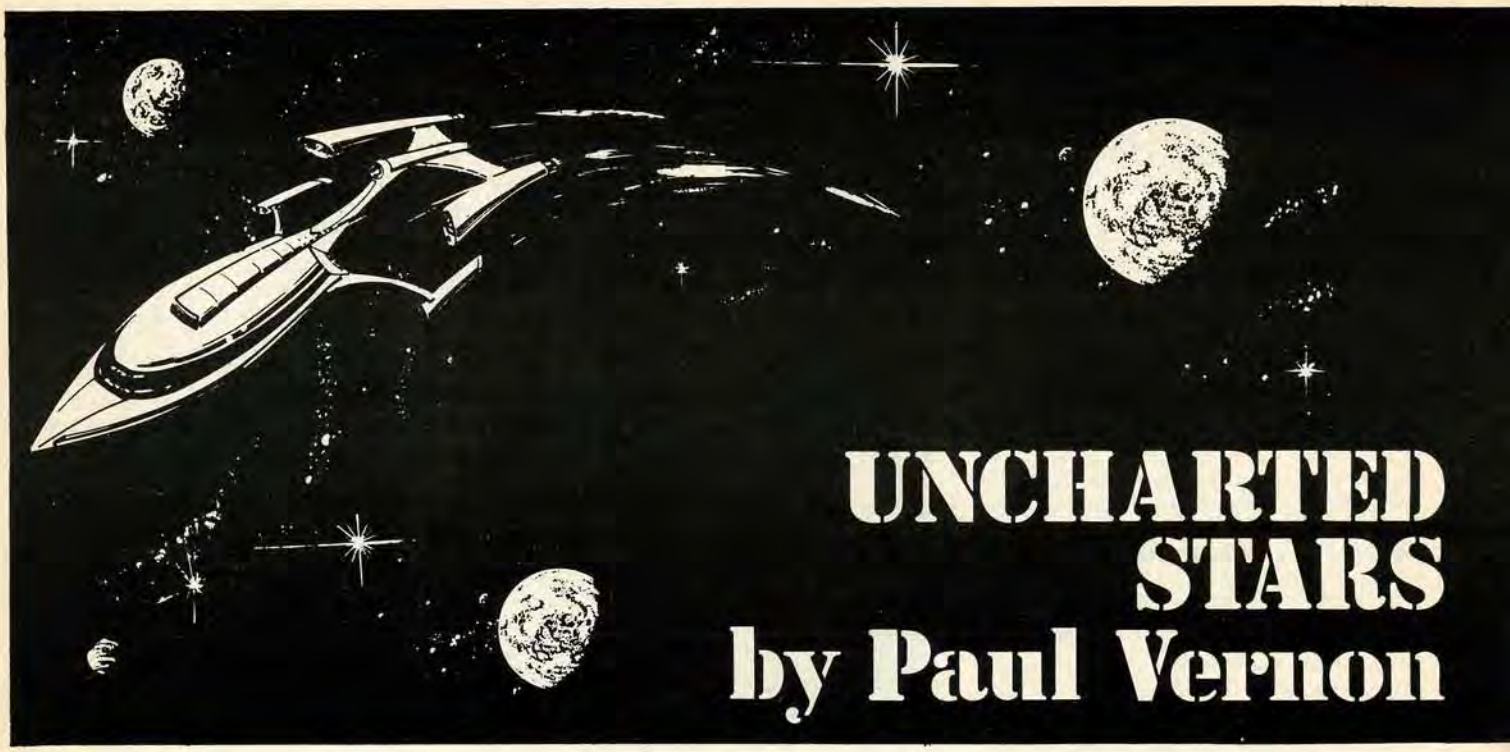
A. If the wording in the DMG is taken literally, then the second attack by a were-creature will have no additional effect because it states that only humans are afflicted by lycanthropy — and lycanthropes are not truly human any more. If this line of argument is followed, then the second type of lycanthropy will have no effect.

Q. If a 1st-level magic user cannot have **Nystul's Magic Aura** or **Tenser's Floating Disc** in his spell book at the beginning of his career, is he prohibited from choosing one of these spells when he gains a level? *(Advanced)*

A. This question raises points other than the obvious one. Both the above spells are specifically mentioned on p39 of the DMG as spells that must be located by the character — either in the possession of another character (PC or NPC) or on a scroll and copied into the MU's 'recipe book'. Naturally, the magic user who is after the spells must be able to 'know' them, as with all other spells.

In the case of spells acquired when a character advances a level, these are not necessarily chosen by the player. The spell so acquired should be a function of the spells in the NPC's spell books, or randomly rolled by the DM if the training supervisor has never been created in detail and is simply assumed to exist at some vague point 'off stage'. In this case, it is entirely possible that a magic user might learn Nystul's Magic Aura or Tenser's Floating Disc. Unlike spells that are acquired between level rises, spells that are gained at this time are automatically in the magic user's book, and are also automatically 'known' by the magic user in question.

Jim Bambra, Mike Brunton, Phil Gallagher & Graeme Morris



UNCHARTED STARS

by Paul Vernon

For most game purposes, the world generation procedures given in Basic **Traveller** work admirably — all the systems generated will be of interest to some class of character and worth at least one visit by a party of adventurers (GDW's **Tarsus** module is a fine example of the possibilities offered by a single Traveller world). However, the fact that all stars have planets, at least one of which is inhabited, can lead to a sense of 'sameness', and poses one great question — since current theory postulates that only 20% of stars have planetary companions, what happened to the other 80%?

Other questions soon follow. If the whole of space is not only known, but populated as well, what do members of the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service do with their time (apart from running the X boat service)? How can space pirates operate so freely when they are as dependent on Imperium controlled starports as merchant craft are? Why are naval patrols so inefficient in apprehending them?

The only meaningful unit of measurement so far as Traveller players are concerned is the interstellar jump, jump-1 being 1 hex (which is also deemed to be one parsec). If we were to expand each hex, and call it five parsecs across (though still jump-1), we would have room for planetless stars and systems with no habitable planets, providing answers to all the above questions. In addition a whole range of new scenarios present themselves — misjumps to planetless or uninhabited systems (a good way of introducing players to the idea); secret Pirate, Zhodani or Solomani bases in the heart of the Imperium; lost scout expeditions from present or past civilisations; worlds whose existence has been purposely kept secret from the authorities and so on. Once away from the main spacelanes the possibilities are limitless!

Each hex from a subsector map which is expanded to five parsecs across can be presented as in Diagram One, and can be seen to have 19 smaller hexes within it. The base chance for each small hex to contain a star system is 9+ on 2D. DMs can be added for certain regions of space — positive for densely packed regions such as clusters and associations, negative for open regions such as spiral fringes or interspiral space.

For each small hex containing a star system the actual number of stars may be determined using the star number table. When this results in multiple stars they will be companions on a throw of 3+ on 1D, throwing once for each possible pairing. All stars within an expanded hex can be considered to be jump-1 apart, with the exception of those deemed to be double or triple stars.

When the total number and grouping of stars is known, the spectral class and size of each can be determined from two (or more in special cases) throws on the star type tables.

The question of which stars have planetary companions must now be answered. Stars in the spectral classes O, B and A have been found to rotate much more rapidly than those in other classes. The angular momentum of a system being constant, it is thought that these other classes of stars may rotate more slowly because most of their system's angular momentum is possessed by the planet Jupiter. Most of the planets in our universe should therefore orbit F, G, K and M class stars, but to keep things interesting we'll give O, B and A types a small chance of having them also.

The base chance for stars to have planets will be 12+ on 2D, with the following DMs: F, N, R or S class +2; G, K or M class +4; Black Hole or Neutron Star in system -12.

The most important factor in deciding whether or not any planets orbiting a star are habitable is the temperature. For life as we know it to be possible, the average temperature should be above the freezing point of water and below boiling point, so the planet should be neither too close nor too far away from the parent star, in what is known as the ecosphere. The hotter the star, the larger will be the ecosphere, and the greater the chance that one or more of its orbiting planets will fall within it. Many of those planets which do, however, will still be uninhabitable due to having unbreathable atmospheres, but many Traveller planets have these anyway. Also, it will be more difficult for planets orbiting stars in binary or trinary systems to maintain average temperatures within these limits.

The base chance of any of a star's planets being habitable will again be 12+ on 2D, with the following DMs: F and G class +5; K class +3; M, N, R and S class +2; White Dwarf -6; Star in binary system -2; Star in Trinary system -3.

For stars which have planets, the number of gas giants, or Jovian type planets will be 2D-4 with the following DMs: O, B and A class -3; Star is a giant -2; Star is a supergiant -3; Star in binary system -1; Star in trinary system -2.

Similarly, the number of Earth type or Terran planets will be 2D-2 with the following DMs: O B and A class -1; Star is a giant -2; Star is a supergiant -3.

The reason why none of these extra stars appear on commercial starmaps is that they would only be of interest to the Scouts, Imperial Navy and those with nefarious motives. The authorities would do their utmost to ensure that the information needed to navigate to them did not fall into the hands of the latter category. For this reason, although the information is embedded in commercial flight generation programs (each of which is useful only for a single sub sector) so as to plot courses around them, only characters with computer-4 or above have

any chance of retrieving it. Even they will only be successful on a throw of 10+ (plus one for every level of expertise over 4), and if the attempt fails the whole program will delete itself (which can turn out to be very expensive). The Scouts and Navy will have Security Suppressor Programs enabling them to travel to these uncharted stars, but each of these will be good only for up to 7 large hexes in case they fall into the wrong hands; one of the best ways of interdicting a world is to make sure that few people know about it and even fewer can get there.

If this optional system for expanding the scope of Traveller is used, it will not detract from the importance of jump-1 routes such as the Spinward Main, as Traders will still want to conduct business at every stop, and few will have the information necessary to go anywhere else anyway. Nor need the GM worry about having to expand every hex in the campaign area, as four expanded hexes — two with habitable systems and two without — can be assigned when needed if kept on hand. This system brings the Traveller Universe much more in line with our own, however, adding greatly to a sense of realism, in addition to opening the way for a whole range of scenarios which would not otherwise be possible. One such is outlined in this issue's Amber Zone 'Posted Missing' set in the expanded hex below.

Andy Slack's ideas on the subject were the starting point for much of the material in this article.

Paul Vernon

STAR NUMBER TABLE

1D	No of Stars in System
1-2	1 Star
3-5	2 Stars
6	3 Stars

STAR TYPE TABLE I - SPECTRAL CLASSES

2D	Spectral Class	Colour of Star	Surface temperature
2	M	RED	3000k
3-4	A	WHITE	8-10,000k
5	B	BLUISH-WHITE	12-25,000k
6-7	K	ORANGE	4-5,000k
8	G	YELLOW	5-6,000k
9-10	F	YELLOW-WHITE	6-7,000k
11	A	as A above	
12	SPECIAL - see below after throwing 1D		
1	O	BLUE-WHITE	35,000k
2	R		
3	N	RED	2,500k
4	S		
5-6	SPECIAL - see below after throwing 1D		
1-2	BLACK DWARF		
3-4	NEUTRON STAR		
5-6	BLACK HOLE		

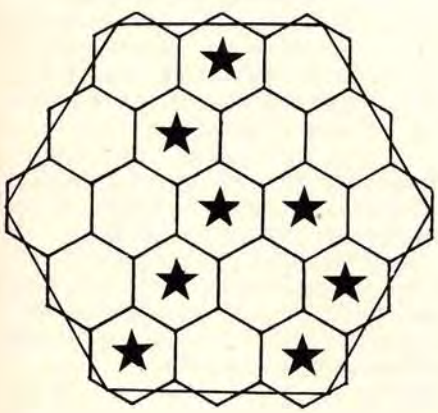
STAR TYPE TABLE II - STAR SIZES

Throw 2D and index by spectral Type

Spectral Class	Supergiant	Giant	Main Sequence	White Dwarf
O	-	-	2-12	-
B	3	2	4-11	12
A & F	2	3	4-11	12
G, K, M, N, R, S	2	3	4-12	-

DIAGRAM ONE

DIAGRAM ONE



System	Star	Spectral Class	Size	J-Type Planets	T-Type Planets	No Habitable
1	1	K	MS	0	0	0
2	1	G	MS	0	0	0
	2	K	MS	7	4	0
3	1	K	SG	2	2	0
	2	F	MS	0	0	0
4	1	K	G	0	3	0
	2	NEUTRON		0	0	0
5	1	F	MS	0	3	0
	2	K	MS	0	0	0
6	1	A	WD	0	0	0
	2	K	MS	4	5	0
7	1	K	MS	0	1	0
8	1	A	MS	0	0	0
	2	B	MS	0	0	0
	3	M	MS	0	0	0

NOTE ON SIZE

MS = Main Sequence **SG = Supergiant** **WD = White Dwarf** **= Binary Systems**

POSTED MISSING — AMBER ZONE

Players' Information

While socialising in the starport bar on Feri/Regina (0405) the adventurers are approached by a smart young woman dressed in a Merchant 3rd Officer's uniform who says that a mutual acquaintance told her they were seeking gainful employment. She tells them that until recently she was employed as a Navigation Officer by a Sectorwide shipping firm, but refuses to give her name or that of her former employers. At some point during her last term she served aboard a type M liner whose captain regarded her with utter contempt, encouraging her to request a transfer from her very first day. Soon after her transfer came through, the ship failed to complete one of its scheduled voyages and was posted missing.

Shortly before transferring to a happier berth, she told the captain that she suspected a fault to be appearing in the navigational interact console and was characteristically ignored. She has kept the information to herself ever since, and it is her belief that the malfunction manifested itself on the ship's last voyage resulting in it being caught in the gravity well of some fuelless stellar system lying somewhere between its point of departure and intended destination.

She would like the adventurers to aid her in her search for the ship, in return for which she will offer them 60% of its salvage value when found and claimed. In order that they can't leave her to go looking themselves, she will only tell them enough to complete whichever part of the task they are engaged in at any one time, hence her evasiveness concerning her name and her employers' (in case the group find what they need to know from library data).

Referee's Information

This adventure was designed for a party who have access to a jump-2 ship of some kind, be it Type S Scout, Type J seeker, Type A2 Far Trader, or even a yacht capable of two successive jump-1s. Should the party not have access to such a ship then the merchant officer must have a noble accomplice with a yacht but no crew, in which case the adventurers will only be offered 30% of the salvage value.

The smart young officer and her escort are:

MERCHANT 3RD OFFICER
Leila Pagella 775998 Age 26 2 terms Cr 30,000
Navigation-2, Computer-1, Steward-1, Gun Cbt-1

NOBLE
Paulo haut-Deville 47547C Age 30 3 terms Cr 50,000
Pilot-1, Engrg-1, Gun Cbt-1, Carousing-1 Yacht, Gun

Both Leila and Paulo will be willing to use all their cash in furtherance of the salvage expedition. If the yacht is used Leila will be more forthcoming, as the adventurers would not be able to conduct the search themselves in any event.

The adventure is in two parts, the first of which will be to get hold of a security suppressor program pertaining to hex 0406 in the Regina subsector. There are a number of ways in which this may be attempted. The Feri scout base will definitely have a copy of the program, and each scout ship in the Feri system will have one on a throw of 8+. The players may decide that burglary or hijacking is the best method, or they may attempt to bribe scout personnel to furnish them with the necessary navigation tapes to visit each system in the hex, or hire a computer expert to crack the security on their generate program (if they have one).

Once they have the means of getting there, they must search the systems in the expanded hex given in the **Uncharted Stars** article (p43). Before the search begins, the players will be able to determine the stars in the systems (spectral class and whether single, binary or trinary systems) but not which have planets. The referee may assign systems to any location in the large hex in case the players have also read the article.

While in each system, the players will have two chances of encountering other ships, occurring on a throw of 11+ (DM +1 if refuelling possible in the system), the actual ship(s) to be determined from the ship table below.

2D Throw	Ship(s) encountered
2	Naval Kinunir Class Cruiser
3	Pirates in 800 ton Type C Cruiser
4	Pirates in 400 ton Corsair
5	Pirates/Mutineers in Type A Free Trader
6	Naval Type T Patrol Cruiser or Gazelle
7-8	Type S Scout/Courier
9	400 ton Scout Survey Ship
10-11	Smugglers
12	If refuelling possible in system throw twice on the table ignoring a 12 result. Otherwise the party has found a marooned Type A Free Trader.

Naval personnel will be on anti-piracy duty and be very suspicious of the adventurers' ship unless they claim to have misjumped — stealing Imperial Scout Service programs and bribing scout personnel both carry stiff penalties, and it is possible that a piracy charge will be pinned on them in addition.

Scout vessels are more likely to flee and inform the Navy of intruders in the system, which will be thoroughly searched by naval vessels for 1D weeks afterwards. Neither pirates nor smugglers will react kindly to the adventurers, though smugglers are much less likely to attack them.

Some of the systems have other factors of note, as follows:

System 3 One of the terran planets orbiting the Supergiant is in fact an asteroid belt. Although much of the material is of little value, one section is fairly rich, and is being worked secretly by a group of belters using a type J Seeker and a 17 ton mining boat (6G, armed with a mining laser). The size and armament of the group to be determined by that of the players. The belters will be encountered on a 9+, throw once per day spent in the belt. The belters will be worried at the prospect of poachers and will take steps to ensure that news of their strike does not become common knowledge.

System 4 The Neutron Star in this system is drawing off a constant stream of stellar matter from its giant companion and giving off a considerable amount of X-rays which will register on ships' sensors immediately it enters the system. For each hour spent in the vicinity, characters lose 1 point of endurance, and any points lost over 3 will be permanent (otherwise they will return at the rate of one per week). A character reduced to zero endurance will die. Another possible danger is that the ship will become caught in the neutron star's gravitational field — escape velocity from its surface is 15,500 G!!

System 5 None of the three planets is within star 1's ecosphere, and none have any icecaps suitable for use in refuelling. The *CSS Roxanne Oberlindes*, the type M Merchant the party is looking for, is in orbit around the outermost planet, and ships' sensors will pick up its faint distress signals from 500,000 miles away.

The hard and callous captain of the Roxanne, realising the full implications of the ship's predicament — stranded in a fuelless system off the main spacelanes with insufficient fuel to make a jump — requested a computer prediction as to how long it would be before a ship approached closely enough to pick up their distress signals. The answer was three years, but the ship only carried enough supplies and fuel to support life for 30 days if all the passengers and crew were taken into account.

After calculating that there was enough fast drug (used by some high passengers) on board to last the crew for four years and that if the fuel from the 30 ton ship's boat were used and the life support turned on only periodically, it should last them almost as long, he depressurised the passenger deck and turned off the power in all areas except the bridge and crew quarters, effectively murdering all the passengers, high, low and middle. The few high passengers who managed to get into emergency vacc suits were shot, as were those members of the crew who offered objections. Crew members who are still alive will be equally culpable, and will continue to support the captain to save their own necks.

The laser on the ship's boat was used to hole the hull on the passenger level before its fuel was drained, and the crew have been taking fast drug ever since. The passengers will have been dead for about 720 days before the ship is found, 12 days subjective for the crew, whose number and armament should be determined by those of the adventurers.

If the Travellers contact the ship before reaching it, the crew will have time to take fast drug antidote. They will tell them that the ship misjumped originally to another system and was attacked by pirates while making its way from a gas giant. The hull was holed in the battle, the captain decided they couldn't hold the pirates off for much longer and activated the jump drive. The ship was close to the gas giant, however, and misjumped again. They will say they kept the low berths functioning as long as possible, but had to switch them off 60 days ago to save fuel.

There are a number of clues that the crew are not telling the truth, however, and they are visibly nervous. The hole in the hull was caused by a small gauge laser from short range, and this can be determined by any character with gunnery skill. The Roxanne's own lasers have not been fired, and she has a complete store of missiles. The low passengers have been dead much longer than 60 days, as anyone with medic-2 or above will easily determine. The ship's log has no record of the imaginary first misjump, the powerplant monitor log is incriminating, and blood stains are in evidence on the passenger deck.

The captain realises that their story will not hold up under detailed examination, and intends to hijack the ship after the adventurers are feeling the effects of the rescue party he has planned. They will then tell the authorities that both ships were hijacked by pirates, but that the Roxanne's crew were lucky enough to escape in that of their rescuers.

If none of the adventurers realises that all is not as it seems, Leila definitely will.

System 7 This star's planet (X-614000-0) is too far away from the primary to be in the ecosphere. It is a regular stop-over for pirates in the area, however, as they can refuel from its icecaps, and they maintain a small, semi-permanent base on its small moon. A pirate vessel of some kind will be encountered here on a throw of 6+. On 10+ it will be accompanied by a recent capture in the 1-400 tons range.

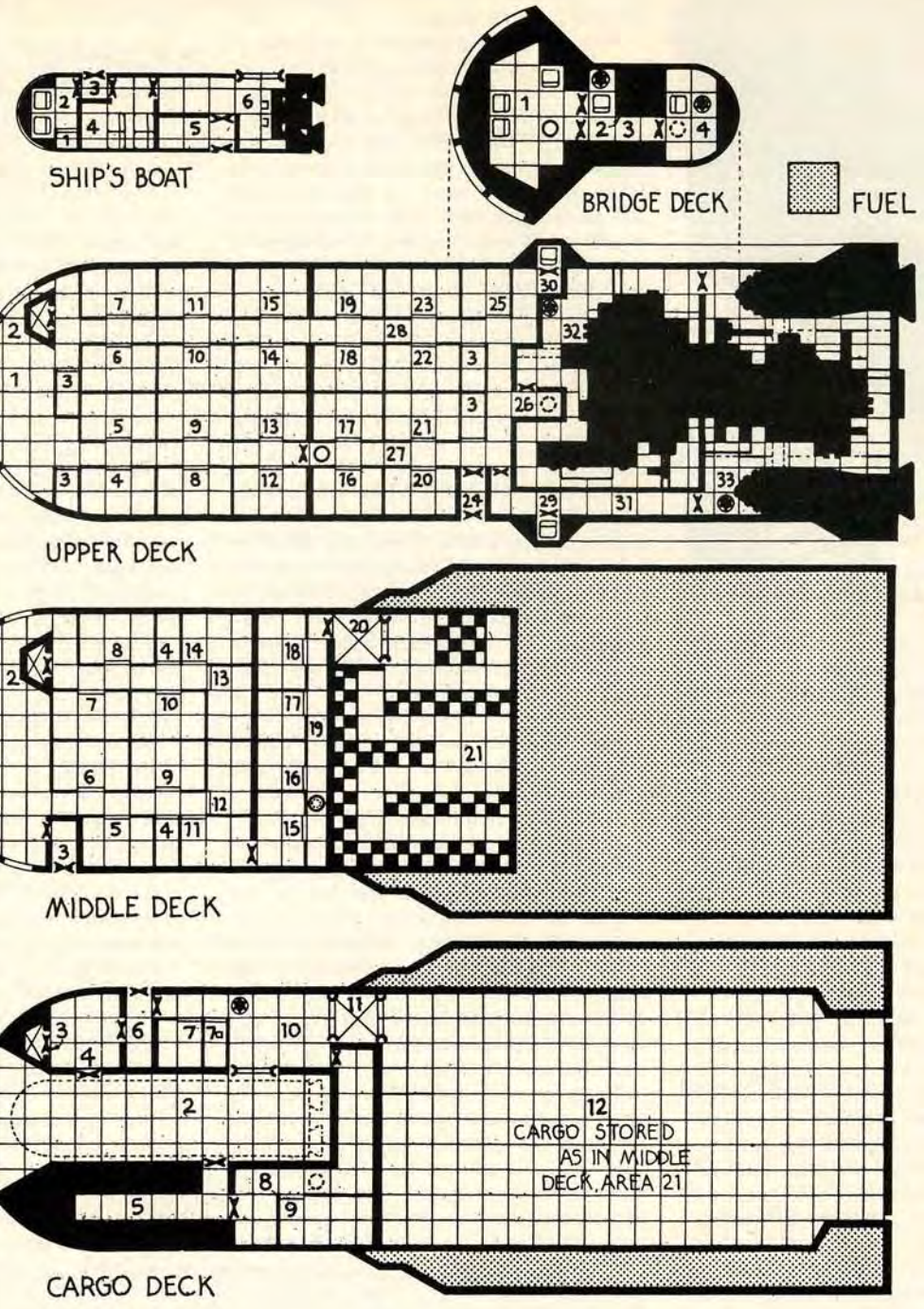
Once the adventurers have possession of the Roxanne, their troubles are by no means over. The ship needs 60 tons of fuel to enable it to make a jump-1 and earn the party a 10% salvage payment plus 10% of the value of its cargo. This will entail risking further encounters with pirates or the authorities, both of whom will claim the prize as their own.

Alternatively, they could give the position of the ship to the insurance firm who have title to it and receive 5% of the ship's value if/when they manage to recover it. Even in this case there is a chance (10+ on 2D) that the insurance company will inform the authorities of the players' recent misdemeanours, and a similar chance that the ship will have disappeared before their repos get to it unless the adventurers have purposely disabled the Roxanne beforehand.

LIBRARY DATA

CSS Roxanne Oberlindes Type M Merchant 600 Tons
M-74943
Laid down — 184-1083 **First Flight** — 239-1084
Builders Horronon Freightech, Mora/Mora, for Oberlindes Lines LIC
Last Known Flight Feri to Roup, jumped from Feri 34-1104
Posted Overdue 042-1104, Roup **Posted Missing** 099-1104

FINAL MANIFESTS
Crew 9
High passengers 11
Middle passengers 6
Low passengers 18
Cargo Mechanical parts — 40 tons
Electrical parts — 60 tons
Pharmaceuticals — 2 tons
Present Owners — Hault Lloyd LIC
Book Value (Ship Only) MCr 273 **Found** N/A



Key to Roxanne Oberlindes

Ship's Boat
(Launch, 20 tons)

1 Locker
2 Bridge
3 Airlock
4 Passengers
5 Low Berths
6 Cargo/Drives

Bridge Deck

1 Bridge
2 Computer
3 Turret Access
4 Dorsal Turret

Upper Deck

1 Lounge
2 Lift Shaft
3 Freshers
4-23 Staterooms
24 Crew Airlock
25 Locker
26 Bridge Access
27-28 Companion Ways
29 Port Turret
30 Starboard Turret
32 Power Turret
33 Drives

Middle Deck

1 Lounge
2 Lift Shaft
3 Passenger Airlock
4 Freshers
5 Sickbay
6-14 Staterooms
15 Galley
16 Food Store
17 Mech Stores
18 Mech Workshop
19 Access Passage
20 Cargo Lift Shaft
21 Upper Cargo Hold

Cargo Deck

1 Boat Bay Doors
2 Ship's Launch
3 Lift Shaft
4 Passenger Reception
5 Low Berths
6 Main Airlock
7 Vacc Repairs/ Storeroom
7a Fresher
8 Access Passage
9 Elec Repairs/ Stores
10 Cargo Office
11 Cargo Lift Shaft
12 Main Cargo Hold

Fantasy Media

Colin Greenland, author of ***Daybreak on a Different Mountain*** *and co-editor of SF magazine* ***Interzone****, reviews the latest additions to the fantasy/SF media.*

Scene from Luc Besson's ***THE LAST BATTLE****, which released on 10 August*

In a derelict office block surrounded by encroaching desert, a man is building a one-seater aeroplane. Not far away a gang of men live in an encampment of rusting cars. From the car of the gang chief, the lone aviator steals the battery he needs and flies away, to crash in a ruined city where a ragged doctor paints zodiacs and magical animals on the walls of the fortified hospital.

Luc Besson's **The Last Battle** (ICA, 15) is visually the most startling evocation of life struggling on after some devastating catastrophe, not least because it's in Cinemascope *and* black and white: an unusual combination, to say the least. It's mysterious, it's violent, and it has a wild and fascinating beauty. Don't worry about the fact that it's French: the characters can't speak a word, much as the hero tries. Communication is reduced to the primitive. Dressed in bizarre samurai gear cobbled together from old uniforms and industrial equipment, the characters gesture and grunt, and fight. The effect is touching, rather than grim.

If I came away unsatisfied, it was for two reasons. First, that the imaginative design and photography had been lavished on a very basic and unimaginative plot — they could have used just about any J G Ballard story, and made a few *comments* on life in the ruins, instead of just watching it go by. The other thing that put me off was Besson's bleak and wholly negative idea of the role of women after the collapse of civilisation: two female characters only, both merely glimpsed in the shadows of the cells where their masters keep them for their pleasure.

There is, of course, another movie whizzing across the cinema screens of the nation which ought to offer more for female viewers, because it's called **Supergirl** (Thorn EMI, PG). 'The one thing we didn't want was Superman in drag,' said director Jeannot Szwarc, and to a large extent Helen Slater manages very well. Unlike her cousin, who came to Earth as a baby, Kara has grown up in the utopian refuge of Argo City, in 'inner space', and arrives on this troubled planet as a totally innocent adolescent. Slater is convincing and sympathetic as the ingenuous schoolgirl and the Woman of Steel without becoming either butch or dumb blonde; though it is noticeable that the evil Selena's worst crime is not stealing the world but stealing Supergirl's boyfriend Ethan (played by Hart Bochner doing his best John Travolta impersonation). Rumour has it that Slater was dubbed throughout, but the whole cast might as well have been grunting in French for all the sense the dialogue makes. I may be old-fashioned, but I can't help wishing today's film-makers thought it worthwhile including a little logic in their fantasies, instead of having characters whose motivations, abilities and weaknesses change all the time, with no explanation whatever. A fun film, in a vacuous sort of way.

Another heroine innocent of the world and of her own powers is Lilune, in Tanith Lee's **The Castle in the Dark** (Unwin, £2.95). Perhaps she'd know more if she weren't kept locked up in a lonely castle by two horrible witches and never allowed to see light of day. The harper Lir is summoned by a force he knows nothing of, to rescue Lilune — and then the trouble begins. Tanith Lee starts with the most traditional of material, pure Brothers Grimm; but she goes over and over it, peeling away layer after layer of assumptions and illusions, inverting our expectations of good and evil time and time again. There's nothing simple about a fairytale by the time she's told it.

I often hear people, some of them publishers, complaining that there's too much fantasy published these days, and too little solid science fiction. Those who are searching for a drop of the hard stuff should be glad to find James P Hogan's **Voyage from Yesteryear** (Penguin, £2.50): it even includes a nine-page speculation about two different versions of particle physics! The 368 remaining pages are packed with intrigue and adventure on an alien world in the Alpha Centauri system. The venturers on board the *Mayflower II* don't quite see eye to eye with the people of Chiron. The twist is, these aliens are humans too: four generations of colonists who've been out of touch while Earth has been preoccupied with its own problems, most notably World War Three. The clash of worlds is a clash of world-views, the peaceful anarchy of Chiron against the new authoritarian regimes of Earth. It's unfortunate Hogan couldn't have made it just a *little* less obvious which side's going to win.

Colin Greenland

Next month Colin will be back to take a look at some more media releases, including Universal's film ***Conan the Destroyer*** *and Gregory Benford's new novel* ***Against Infinity****.*

Letters

*Once again, **mes amis**, the letters page, the meeting place for British gamers. This is where you can give vent to your feelings on any subject that might be of interest to your peers. Personally, I find it astonishing that in nearly twenty issues we haven't had a letter about the astonishing brilliance of Essex County Cricket Club or West Ham United, but anyone may now rectify that by writing to: **IMAGINE magazine (letters)**, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD.*

#16 – you loved it or you hated it. Here are two opinions.

Simon Webster, Sheffield: I'm sure you'll be pleased to know that you out-did the competition with #16, which had the best cover to date; Egypt was above average; the fiction likewise. Pelinore might develop into something worthwhile, but why launch the project when you have to ask other people to write it for you?

Duncan Harris, Bristol: I must write and express my disgust at #16. The only useful pieces to my mind were **There & Back Again** and **Goroghwen**. **Sethotep** was long, drawn-out and boring; **VOP** is unfunny. I'm incensed by the waste of pages from the Egyptian special — all of it requires a backdrop totally different to the **AD&D** and **DQ** games. And GET SOME GOOD COVERS!

*Opinion was completely divided about whether the **D&D**® games can cover a milieu like the Egyptian. Those who felt it could, and who enjoy playing in different cultures loved the magazine; others dismissed the material as irrelevant. An interesting split of opinion, and it was very nearly 50/50. Seeing as we intend to cover Far East and Nordic milieux early in 1985, perhaps a few more of you had better tell us what you think of 'culture' themes! What did people say about the Celts' return?*

Denis Jones, Eltham, London: Celts — it'll do; perhaps the Arthurian Age could be covered in detail soon? **Tir Nan Og** — bring back **Thunder Crag** and **Black Rose** style scenarios; **Lyndum** and **The Honour of the Tribe** were good one-off scenarios. Re-doing legends is not my style.

James Manktelow, Bramley, Surrey: For once I agreed with Lew Pulsipher, **IMAGINE** magazine is getting a bit entertainment-orientated, with less emphasis on useful things. The Celt articles, for instance, were useless with regards to the **D&D** game. They were OK as histories, but just did not compare with the articles in #5.

Tim Ellis, Sutton Coldfield: More, more, more — for all regions. How about Near and Far East, eg **Arabian Nights** style and **Japanese**.

*So there you go. Let's start having your votes now for the Far East and Norse backgrounds, and tell us what articles you want to see connected with them. Incidentally, in the Xmas issue (#21) we'll be printing a Feedback sheet, which will give you the opportunity to shape the future of **IMAGINE** magazine in 1985 and beyond. You'll also be in with a chance of winning some pretty good prizes.*

*One last look back at #16/17. These saw the launch of **Pelinore**, a campaign world designed to link magazine scenarios, to provide new adventures, and – just as importantly – to encourage the participation of British authors in its creation. Of course, it's early days yet, but here are some initial reactions:*

Denis Jones: I'm not impressed. Should you go through describing every inhabitant? The Thief and the Assassin will be killed by the party, Mylitis and Grimnix will have their house searched for potions. The public house will be a good place for a bar-room brawl; the Weapon Designers Workshop people will be asked 'make me an anti-tank gun'. Is the designer keeping his name secret for safety?

Philip J E Francis: With the promise of Pelinore, in which we gamers, can participate, **IMAGINE** magazine has really surpassed itself.

Jeremy Lewis, East Croydon, Surrey: For the last 50 minutes I have been fuming while redrawing the plan views of Westmeet Square in the City League. I like to be able to tell at a glance the dimensions of a room or building; your scale meant that this would be next to impossible. You might like to print other buildings with a grid.

*Jeremy's was not the only practical idea, and we hope to incorporate as many of them as practical in future issues. Personally, I'd have put a bit of tissue paper over the maps with a grid, rather than redrawing them, if that kind of reference was required. As for Denis, I think your problem is more with your players than with Pelinore. Do your players kill every thief/assassin they meet? Do they steal everything they want? Do they ask for anti-tank guns? Let me offer three solutions. 1) A word in the ear of the nearest Thieves' Guild will cure them of their first anti-social habit. The Assassins of the City League are very good at reforming this kind of prejudice. 2) Turn to the **Law and Order** material in this very magazine. Assuming that your party is too tough for Mylitis, and overcome any traps he might have on the Apothecary's stocks, they might still run foul of the Punctillan or the Knights Ocular. This could give them an ideal opportunity to learn what happens when you go stealing in a city. 3) If your party can find a way of describing an anti-tank gun to Wetherlam and the Elves, allowing for his 13 intelligence, and you can find a smith able to knock together steel of the right quality, and some tungsten and HE for the shells, they'll have a go at making one for you, and it shouldn't cost more than a few hundred thousand gp. Then all they need to do is find a tank to use it on....*

*Another for/against debate has broken out over the final of the **Players' Association**, as announced in #17.*

Donald McIntosh, Elgin, Scotland: I must protest strongly at the wanton destruction of the PA. As a member for the last 2 years, I can only express disgust at this decision.

The PA provided those of us who were fanatical enough to pay for it with an 'inside ear' into the workings of TSR. Perhaps you could set up a method for some of us to join the RPGA society other than by applying directly to TSR in the USA.

Denis Jones: Well done on deciding to shut down the PA, as it was a waste of time since IMAGINE magazine arrived. At last you have seen sense.

*Readers from the very early days will recall that it was only the tremendous outcry of the membership of the PA that held it together after the launch of IMAGINE magazine. The problem all the way through has been the fact that the magazine starved resources that used to produce the independent newsletter **PAN**.*

Back Issues

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and an association of this kind without a newsletter is no kind of organisation at all. Recently, TSR Inc decided to terminate the production of the special RPGA modules, which further eroded the advantages accruing to the PA. Many of us here wish that it had proved possible for the PA and IMAGINE magazine to co-exist, but we have to confess that those who said it couldn't be done were right.

Adrian Evans, Barry, S Glamorgan: Chinz the Charisma King commented in the August issue of the letters page that computers have nothing to do with role-playing games. I take exception.

True, the best computer adventure game cannot compare with a role-playing game and I feel this is the fault of programmers who try to emulate rpgs — a technique which due to a computer's all too limited memory and input is doomed to failure.

So, what use is a computer? In order to maintain a stable world, a series of rules were set up involving calculations for combat, etc, and it is precisely in this field that the computer can be used.

I have created a programme which contains current files on all the different character attributes which can be altered immediately for each new situation. No more pencils and erasers (and no more character sheets to buy!).

I think people have tended to be awestruck by computers. They are like calculators, just aids in allowing you to get on with an adventure.

No more character sheets? Why don't you go the whole hog, fit two cardboard wings to your telly screen (sorry, monitor) and stifle the market for DM's screens as well? And then what am I going to do with five gross of the things? This progress business is all very well, but let's be reasonable about it....

Christopher Gorman, Penmaenmawr, Wales: After reading your rave review of Steven Gallagher's **Follower** in the June issue, I went out and bought a copy. I agree with everything Colin Greenland said about it. It is excellent. I wanted to suggest that it would make the basis of a reallly good role-playing scenario; it's got a strong Quest element (John Visco's journey) and a final confrontation in an interesting, isolated place.

I hope you follow this up, as it's a book I'd really like to play.

Me too. The other element of our plans for the magazine in 1985 I want to tell you about revolves around scenarios based on the works of best-selling authors. What do people feel about the idea of following the adventures of a fore-runner of Elric, set in the heroic lands devised by Michael Moorcock; exploring the very fringes of known space in a version of Bob Shaw's ***Ship of Strangers****; meeting the very mysterious* ***Traveller in Black*** *in realms bordering on Chaos, as in the John Brunner stories, or treading in the footsteps of a new hero in a new world, devised by Brian Lumley. Does this sound like the sort of material you want? Get out the pencils and erasers you tucked in the drawer after you bought the computer, and let us know!*

Ah, nearly done for another issue. Just space for a quick question. Anybody got one?

Simon Webster: How can you keep ignoring **Runequest**.

Be patient – we're doing our best.

Letters edited by Paul Cockburn

VOP.... by Ian Gibbs

HULLO BALDER. WHAT'S THAT FUNNY SMELL?
IT'S MY ANTI-PEST VAPOUR. IT'S SUPPOSED TO VIOLENTLY REPEL ANY CREATURE WITH ANIMAL INTELLIGENCE OR LESS.
I. GIBBS 6/84.
170
DOES IT WORK?
OBVIOUSLY NOT.

Next Issue

WANTED: CLERICS

Applications are invited for the post of CLERIC with an adventurous party.
Applicants need not be experienced, but should be familiar with the following texts:

CLERICS — ideas for developing the class
ALIGNMENT — restrictions or challenges?
EDGED WEAPONS — the controversy continues
SPECIALIZATION — from acolyte to expert
FLAILS — new ways to chastise the disbeliever
TRIAL BY ORDEAL — an examination of its history

Successful candidates will be ready for the greatest test of them all

the Quest for the Necklace of Lillith!

All in IMAGINE magazine, #20, with full supporting features.

GAME COMPANY

On this page we will advertise your RPG event or club, or appeal for other gamers in your area, free of charge. Write to IMAGINE magazine, The Mill, Rathmore Rd, Cambridge.

Clubs

First, a word from Jenn in SOUTHWELL, Notts: *'A bunch of us who play **D&D**, and might get around to **AD&D**, play **Car Wars** and **Risk**, and even own the rules to "that Bunny game", are looking for a large group of idiots in our area to play: a) that lot above, b) **Diplomacy** and c) a huge game of **Killer**. We also play **Monopoly, Game of Life, Whist, Cribbage** and **Gin Rummy** (house rules apply). Water fights optional. Contact the Secretary at 15 Pinewood Close, Southwell, Notts NG25 0DD; Tel 0636 813728'.*

Gary Wilton of GLENROTHES, Fife is looking for players in his area interested in **Swordbearer** (or anything else). Contact him at 161 Abbotsford Drive, Caskieberran, Glenrothes, Scotland.

Another Scot, from FORRES in Moray, is looking for a club where he can play **AD&D** in his area. James H McLennan, 3 Urquhart St, Forres, Moray, Scotland.

Hudson Shaw of HASTINGS asked us to place the following notice: *'Fantasy cartoonist and virtual novice gamer, 23, seeks players in his area. Willing to try any game once, expecially the fantasy-type games, **RuneQuest, AD&D, T&T,** etc.'* 36 Saxon Rd, Hastings, E Sussex.

Paul Seager, 19, wants experienced* players and referees in the MALDON/Dengle Hundred/Woodham Ferrers area of Essex, to play **D&D, Star Frontiers, T&T, Top Secret, Traveller, DragonQuest, RuneQuest** and **Star Trek; the RPG** — or anything else. Phone Paul on (0621) 772024 after 6.30pm if you're interested. *Beginners also welcome.

David Pearson is looking for gamers in the HINCKLEY area, interested in playing **Dungeons & Dragons** and **Star Frontiers** games. Write to him at 44 Roseway, Stoke Golding, Warks CV13 6HQ.

North Liverpool RPG Club require referees and players for their newly-formed group. They play **RuneQuest, Dungeons & Dragons, Call of Cthulhu, Traveller, Top Secret, Man Myth & Magic, Star Frontiers, Bushido, Middle Earth** and any other system you care to take along, particularly the lesser known ones. Novices, veterans and youngsters all welcome; experienced referees to teach the above games required. Contact Dave Perry, 141 Bedford Rd, Walton L4 5PT or Tony Smith, 233 Fernhill Rd, Bootle 20, L20 0AQ; or just go along to the Rice Lane Community Centre on Mon, Tues or Thurs at 6-10pm, Sat 1-5pm.

Events

Ipswich Games Day 1984 will be held at St Josephs College, Belstead Rd, on Saturday 13th October from 10am to 6pm. Admission 30p. There will be the usual mixture of RPGs and board games, plus the finals of the eastern region tabletop wargaming championships, and a computer tournament. Enquiries to **War & Peace**, the Ipswich hobby shop. Tel: (0473) 58356.

Details of the following events have appeared in recent issues of IMAGINE magazine: **ConQuest**, Glasgow, October 12-14; **Midcon** (the Star Trek version), Leicester, Oct 12-14; **Novacon 14**, Birmingham, November 9-11.

Other gaming events will be covered in future issues: **Yorcon**, Leeds, April 5-8 1985; **Son of Pandemonium**, Toronto, Ontario, January 19 1985.

THE HERO IS BACK!
RUBIC OF MOGGEDON
A DARK NIGHT ON THE PLAINS OF TREMENS: THE HOWL OF THE WIND MINGLES WITH THE SOUND OF FEEDING BLOODBEASTS...
HOOOWOOOWWL!
LONG AGO, WHEN THE FIRST DUKE BETRAYED ME, I MADE A PACT WITH DEATH, THE GRIM REAPER!
ULP
SCRUNCH!
SLURRP!
SLAVER!
SWALLOW!
AND A GRIM DRAMA IS ENACTED IN THE TOWER OF TERROR!
EIGHT HAVE FALLEN TO MY SNARES— EIGHT PRINCES OF THE BLOOD OF ALBERIC! EIGHT PRINCES IN ASPIC, WAITING ON THE NINTH!
UNGH!
HOO
OOWL!
SLOOWUP!
RUBIC — YOU ARE THE LAST PRINCE OF MOGGEDON. YOUR SUFFERING IS NECESSARY — TO MY REVENGE!
THAT'S THE PACT!
I'M NOT REALLY A PRINCE...
FOR TEN LONG YEARS HAVE I AWAITED YOU — FOR TEN YEARS HAVE YOU EVADED MY LURES! BUT NOW...
PROD!
I JUST CHANGED CLOTHES WITH ONE!
..BEHOLD THE SALVER I HAVE APPOINTED!
REALLY — IT'S TRUE! CROSS MY HEART AND HOPE TO... GULP!
AT MIDNIGHT MY CONJURATION BEGINS...
MRS BEETONS NECRONOMICON
... IF I CAN ONLY GET THIS BLASTED SAUCE TO COME OUT RIGHT!

According to the Manicheean heresy, every evil act you commit furthers the cause of the devil, and every good act is a blow on the side of the angels.

A page for the not-so-experienced adventurer

by Roger Musson

Judging players' behaviour with respect to alignment is one thing that many newcomers to the art of dungeon-mastering seem to have trouble with. I intend, therefore, to look at this in some detail. But first, a little problem to demonstrate that judging alignment behaviour is not a simple task.

You are a second-level paladin in a generally low-level party, wandering along a mountain trail. Suddenly the trail gives way, and you all slide down a (fortunately gentle) slope to a gulley some distance below. As you pick yourself up, you notice that the cleric of the party has fallen some distance from the rest of the group, and has obviously hurt his foot quite badly. And towering over him is a huge red dragon! The rest of the party bolts. What do you do?

There is a school of thought which maintains that Lawful Good Characters Help Their Comrades, and that to maintain your alignment you would have to pitch in and help the cleric. There is, however, the reality that anything but flight is sheer suicide. Does alignment overrule self-preservation? Personally, I don't think it does, but where you draw the line is difficult to see. If it were an orc instead of a dragon, then one would expect the paladin to plough in. Supposing it was a bugbear, or an ogre, or a hill giant? Also, there are other considerations of character personality. A Lawful Good character, put in the witness box, might argue as follows: 'I hold with all the ethical principles of Law and Good, and I apply them whenever I can; only I'm a congenital coward and I go weak at the knees at the thought of fighting. I don't mind the odd spot of adventuring when there's a big party to protect me, but don't expect me to stand and fight if there's trouble.' I can't really see a paladin taking this line, but it seems a legitimate enough argument in itself.

Ultimately, the solution has to depend on how you as DM decide to structure your campaign world. Basically, there are two ways of fitting alignment into the game. The first is to treat it as a matter of ethics; ie, alignment expresses the code of conduct by which an adventurer lives. The second is to treat it as a form of allegiance that the character makes to one of two opposing powers. The first of these is probably the most commonly employed; the second is the original basis of alignment and perhaps the most interesting and fruitful for role-playing.

Under the ethical system, a character of Good alignment is one who, through conviction or education, behaves in a morally good fashion. And I will trust you to know the difference between good and evil; if you don't, by any chance, then I recommend you to see your local cleric — ahem, I mean priest.

Under the allegiance system, a character exists in a world where a great struggle for domination is going on between the forces of Good and the powers of Evil (Sauron or Lord Foul or Satan or Kali — pick your baddie). If a character is of Good alignment, he has decided that he would prefer the powers of Good to triumph, and will fight on their side to that end. Whether all his day-to-day actions are strictly good is another matter, although undoubtedly, Gandalf would be happier if they were.

You can see that this makes a big difference to how one views misdemeanours against one's alignment, and alignment change as well. Under the first system, a Good character who behaves evilly has 'gone rotten' and an Evil character who behaves well has 'turned over a new leaf'. Does it really matter, apart from how it affects themselves? Does a drift in alignment really merit awful consequences? Possibly not, unless the character is involved with deities. Any clerics who behave contrary to the moral precepts of their faith are likely to find their powers desert them altogether, and the same can be said for paladins.

Under the second system, though, change of alignment may mean actively switching from one side to the other, a very drastic course of action. Similarly, any player of Good alignment who persistently behaves in an immoral fashion while professing allegiance to the powers of Good may find himself become an undesirable ally, renounced by the powers he vowed to serve.

There is another twist to all this again, in the form of what in the Middle Ages was known as the Manicheean heresy. In simple terms, this is the theory that the world is a battleground between Good and Evil, fought not with armies as on Middle Earth, but with men's souls. Therefore every evil act you commit furthers the cause of the devil, and every good act is a blow on the side of the angels. If enough acts are done on one side, that side will win the battle finally and have ultimate sway over the whole world. If you choose to adopt this approach, then evidently the day-to-day moral choices made by your characters are important in the great struggle between Good and Evil. Thus those who profess to be allied to the cause of Good will be anxious to stamp out all acts of evil-doing, which will otherwise inhibit and delay the final victory of Good over Evil, or even tip the scales the other way altogether.

So there are several different styles you can employ in how you regard the 'Goodness' of a character's behaviour. At the extremes of laxness, you can play that drift of alignment is only really important when it affects the character's relationship with a deity or similiar power, and pay relatively little attention to the peccadillos of fighting men. Or you can play that what really matters is which side in the cosmic struggle each character supports. Or at the strictest extreme, you can play that every action affects the cosmic balance and must be judged carefully. Which style you prefer is really up to you.

Roger Musson

Next month, language in FRPs; and some further thoughts on alignment in an article by Lew Pulsipher.

Previous beginners' articles are detailed below. To obtain back issues see p48.

#1, 2 & 3: General introduction to rpgs; #4 & 5: Advice for beginning DMs; #6 & 7: Hints on staying alive & completing a mission; #8: Treasure*; #9: Monsters*; #10: Allocating dungeon treasure and monsters*; #11: Time & motion*; #12: Role-playing; #13: Role-playing for DMs*; #14: NPCs*; #15: Mapping*; #16: Scale & the use of miniature figures; #17: DM-ing equipment*; #18: Alignments*

**mainly for DMs.*

Dialog

The infamous columnist from the land of the Los Angeles Olympics takes another look at the world of adventure gaming

by Lew Pulsipher

I was preparing for a long trip to Britain — ah, but this will be printed too late for any of you to deliberately avoid me, *chuckle* — and pondering the British gamer's psyche, if there is such a thing. Turning to my Alter Ego, who had joined me in the study, I said: 'I wonder if there's a notion — maybe hiding in a closet, but still there — among British gamers that being organized while playing a game is somehow counter-productive; inimical to having fun.... a notion that to have fun you *must* be unorganized, "loose", unfocused.'

'Very romantic, that.'

'Yes, with a capital R. Even Dionysian, if you prefer Nietzschean terms. Good old Philosophy 101.'

'Maybe you'd better explain that for non-intellectual types like me, Puls.'

'Eh? That course was a long time ago, Alter. Let me see. Since ancient times Greek philosophers have divided human attitudes into two categories. One could be called Classical, Apollonian, intellectual. The other might be called Romantic, Dionysian, emotional. Lawful and Chaotic are just the latest expressions of the dichotomy, perhaps with slightly different meanings. Through the centuries, historians can trace swings from one to the other — hence the Classical age of Mozart, Hayden and the Enlightenment, followed by the Romantic age of Schuman, Tchaikovski, Wordsworth, etc.'

'And you think many British gamers — probably Americans too, I should think — are of the emotional/Romantic persuasion, at least when they are playing?'

'Yes, Alter, and as a result they are suspicious of anything that makes game-playing more organized, more 'mathematical', less uncertain. They are suspicious of detailed rules that attempt to define as much as possible, even though the burden of decision-making may be decreased by more comprehensive rules. And they're not interested in making the mechanical and physical parts of the game easier to deal with, because it seems to clash with the Romantic ideal.'

'Even though an ounce of organization before a game or during a game frees the players from mundane tasks and wasted effort to allow the players to enjoy the game itself.'

'I couldn't have said it better myself, Alter. You know I'm Apollonian — I started playing wargames because I dislike boardgames that relied largely on chance, which is the supreme Dionysian element — and I get frustrated when referees and players waste time — mine as well as theirs — simply because they're disorganized. I want to enjoy the game, and organization helps me enjoy it. But what can you do with people who are suspicious of organization on principle? A lot of people who are suspicious become sold on the advantages of being organized once they see how much more they can enjoy an organized game, but it's impossible to show thousands of magazine readers individually.'

'Let's face it, Puls, FRP is going to attract more free-formers, more chaots, than any other kind of game — chess and such 'skill' boardgames must be games for Apollonians. Look at all those dice in the D&D game! And heroic fantasy is universally regarded as Romantic —'

'Yes, I'm not entirely Classical.'

'— so you're just going to have to put up with a lot of Chaos in AD&D and other games.'

'I just hate to see people wasting their time unnecessarily, Alter.'

'Anyway, much of the interest in the game is seeing how players express themselves through it, and Chaots are as interesting as Lawfuls.'

'Yes, I like to gauge the "natural alignment" and "natural character class" of players. Most Americans — the males anyway — seem to be naturally Chaotic Neutral, not really evil, but quite self-centred and unpredictable. They're very anti-Kantian.'

'Not more philosophy! Whaddaya mean?'

'Immanuel Kant said something like "treat no human as a means, but as an end only" — his reasoned form of the Golden Rule.'

'Kant was Apollonian?'

'Oh, definitely, **Critique of Pure Reason** and all that. What he meant was don't treat people like objects, or merely as means to getting your own way; treat them as something to be valued in themselves. That could be one definition of "Good" alignment; while "Evil" would be those who go out of their way to treat people as means. Hence slavery would be Evil, except perhaps in quite peculiar circumstances.'

'So, what about American players?'

'Well, they tend not to give a hoot one way or the other. Sometimes they'll act in a Kantian manner, or in an anti-Kantian manner, but not out of any conviction, merely out of a combination of chance and self-interest. In short, they act like thugs. Actually, I should say their characters act that way. Most of them aren't that way in their "real" lives.'

'I think some referees would regard that behaviour as Evil rather than Neutral.'

'Yes, myself included, but most American referees let the thug players call their characters Neutral.'

'Well, Puls, it's another case of the game enabling people to play a role they wouldn't play in real life.'

'Yeah, but why not be heroic? It's "heroic fantasy", isn't it? Why do these people want to be thugs instead of heroes?

'Lack of imagination, Puls. And besides, it's easier to be a thug than a hero. There are fewer constraints. And you're less likely to get killed.'

'What's that definition? "A foolhardy act is a brave act that fails." Thugs find it easy to avoid the foolhardy, except when Chaos gets the better of their judgement — which seems to happen often. Perhaps referees could try to encourage the heroic and discourage thug-like behaviour.'

'How?'

'Well, heroes should get help, while thugs can't expect anyone to look upon them favourably. Heroes should be honoured with gifts of land, titles, perhaps even magic items and money; thugs gain only those rewards they can grab from others. And those referees who "fudge" situations and die rolls can fudge in favour of the heroic, of the good guys, or even the truly evil guys, and let the thugs suffer. A well-played Evil character is more interesting than the thugs. By the way, know one reason why **Traveller** is so popular? Because there's no alignment, characters are expected to act like bully-boys. It's too easy to get killed to encourage characters to act heroically. Besides, there's no reward for it. So the game caters for the preferences of most role-playing gamers.'

'And that's why you don't play it?'

'One reason just about sufficient in itself....'

'And what about "natural" character classes?'

'Another time, Alter. We're late for the computer users' group meeting.'

Lew Pulsipher.

*Apologies to Pul's fans over last month, when **Dialog** was missing. Will next month's instalment include the Doc's views on **British** gamers? Watch this space!*

Press

The longer 1984 goes on, the more it seems to be a year of escalating changes for the fanzine industry. This month, as the Zine Poll results come to light, several zine editors have announced important decisions that are going to radically alter the line-up of the amateur press for the future.

Not the least of these announcements is the home of the Zine Poll itself. In the pre-results issue of **MAD POLICY**, Richard Walkerdine subtly dropped in the fact that he is considering folding the zine after issue 105. He did say that he is only thinking about it, but that is usually a sure sign. Perhaps more immediately shocking to readers of **IMAGINE™ magazine** is the news that Pete Tamlyn is doing more than thinking about a fold; **ACOLYTE 59** is the penultimate issue of this zine. The general public will have to wait for issue 60 to find out the reasons for the fold from Pete himself, but I can say already that Acolyte will be sorely missed by both the postal gaming and frp ends of the hobby. Another, somewhat newer zine is biting the dust as well; Ian Marsh's **YEAR OF THE RAT** has folded due to the lack of response from games players and readers generally. An understandable decision, when the major reason for producing a fanzine is to

get some response — remember that when one next falls through the letterbox and try to drop them a line. YOTR's demise marks the disappearance of the last remnant of **DRAGONLORDS** from the scene.

Where does the future lie? Well, one can hardly ignore **SEWARS 20**, with the traditional mix of hardware and scenarios for the AD&D game. Chris Baylis seems to have taken offence to the mentions of SEWARS in the article on editing a fanzine in #17, and gets in a couple of digs at DragonLords in return, as well as printing an open letter from a contributor which attacks the prozines. Chris is obviously out to make a name for SEWARS, what with talking about making physical improvements to the zine and block voting by the club's members in the Games Day Awards zine category....

DEMON'S DRAWL 7 shows that Jeremy Nuttall has been saved and become a true roleplayer (halleluyah, brothers!). The magazine itself continues to offer a good selection of ideas and articles — even if the Heraldry piece does seem suspiciously close to the one in the

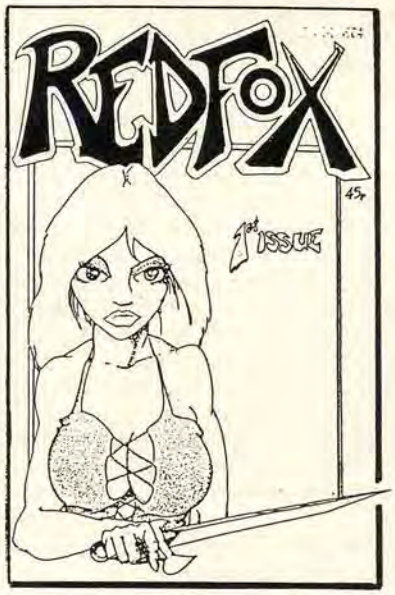
Cuttings

Encyclopedia Britannica! **SHADOWFIRE** is a relatively new zine, aimed at a totally different market to either of the last two mentioned; Richard Lee wants to produce a zine of ideas which will appeal to the newcomer to fandom. So, if you are a novice fanzine reader, or just a potential one, this could be worth investigating.

Perhaps the future lies somewhere completely different. **MYSTIC CRYSTAL** is a new frp zine, inspired, or so the editor tells us, by the article on zine editing that appeared in #17. It just goes to show how quickly you can get a zine out when you try! It's a good first issue, with scenarios and discussion articles for a variety of frp systems. Unfortunately, they did make an elementary mistake, as there is no contact address anywhere inside. Still, the original **TORTURED SOULS** did that too, and look where they are now. I suppose, while we're on the subject, we'd best mention another zine eager to take the place of the 'old guard'. **THE MALKUTH SCRIPTS** is a strange first issue, with poor typing, poor spelling, and articles such as the Drunkard character class, and how to destroy a sensible rpg session. Denis claims to be the youngest editor in the hobby, so he'll probably improve rapidly, but I can't really recommend this in the meantime, even if it is offering **En Garde**, **Barroom Brawl** and **United** amongst other games.

REDFOX is the most unusual zine this month, as it is really a comic. Redfox is the female barbarian character who appeared briefly in the last few issues of DragonLords, now in a full length comic of her own. While the art and story will hardly give Barry Windsor-Smith or Dave Sim many sleepless nights, it is well done and entertaining. Two other publications to mention here between the frp and the postal zines, are **FANTASY ADVERTISER 86**, which continues to offer a good service to comics fans (although I did notice that the roleplaying column had been cut) and **CRASIMOFF'S WORLD 6** which is issued to all players in the CW pbm game, and contains articles, rumours and communications between the players — most of which seem to be threats! Nicely produced for 50p though.

A quick blast through the postal gaming zines to close with, starting with much deserved congratulations and cheers for **HOPSCOTCH**, which has won the Zine Poll for '84. Issue 43



offers the same comprehensive games service as ever. **NMR! 52** was rather dull, after the previous tapezine and 3D issue, except for a change to wordprocessing. It even lacks one of the notorious Rod Anderson covers! **TTYF INTERNATIONAL 43** models itself on the **Financial Times**, with a front cover depicting the dollar-sterling exchange rate for the last year. This serious cover can't mask the light-hearted frp discussion and games inside though. **MONSTERS OF THE PRUNE** is a rather apt title for MASTERS OF THE PRIME 15, which offers a stomach-churning mix of games such as **Judge Dredd**, **Baseball Wars** and **Diplomacy**; as well as book reviews, hobby news, and some over-the-top fanzine reviews.

On the thin, but entertaining side, we have that old, regular **WALAMALAYSIA GAZETTE 45**, with efficient **Diplomacy**, spacefillers, and what appear to be compromising photographs from Manorcon. **MOUSE POLICE** take their last review in this space to heart with 'odd, but promising' plastered across the cover of issue 6. It is mainly an **En Garde** report, but offers openings for **Railway Rivals** and **Scrabble** as well. Lastly, **CUT & THRUST 25** draws best blood as an En Garde vehicle. *Merde*, even ze Paul Cockburn chappie 'as been drawn into ze playing!

I'll have a few things to say about the Zine Poll and Games Day results next time. For now, here are a selected few placings from the Zine Poll, as published in Mad Policy:

1st Hopscotch
2nd NMR!
3rd Mad Policy
Cut & Thrust 6th; Acolyte 7th; Take That You Fiend 10th; Masters of the Prime 36th; Walamalaysia Gazette 42nd.

Zines reviewed by Mike Lewis

Contact Addresses

ACOLYTE, Pete Tamlyn, 2 Poplar Road, The Coppice, Aylesbury HP22 5BN (45p); **CRASIMOFF'S WORLD NEWSLETTER**, KJC Games, 5 Vicarage Avenue, Clevelys, Blackpool, Lancs FY5 2BD (50p); **CUT & THRUST**, Derek Wilson, 321 Headley Road East, Woodley, Reading, Berks RG5 4SE (25p); **DEMON'S DRAWL**, Jeremy Nuttall, 49 Longdown Rd, Congleton, Cheshire; **FANTASY ADVERTISER**, Martin Lock, 3 Marlow Court, Britannia Square, Worcester WR1 3DP (50p); **HOPSCOTCH**, Alan Parr, 6 Longfield Gardens, Tring, Herts (40p); **MAD POLICY**, Richard Walkerdine, 144 Stoughton Road, Guildford, Surrey GU2 6PG (30p); **MALKUTH SCRIPTS**, Denis Jones, 22 Beechhill Rd, Eltham, London SE9 1HH (?); **MASTERS OF THE PRIME**, Bryan Betts, 48 Cotham Vale, Redland, Bristol BS6 6HS (50p); **MOUSE POLICE**, Rob Wilson, 6 Shorefields, Benfleet, Essex (20p); **MYSTIC CRYSTAL**, (?); **NMR!**, Brian Creese, 256 Canbury Park Road, Kingston on Thames, Surrey KT2 6LG (45p); **REDFOX**, Alastair McGilvray, 393 Mansfield Rd, Nottingham NG5 2DG; **SEWARS**, Chris Baylis, 12 The Fryth, Basildon, Essex (60p); **SHADOWFIRE**, Richard Lee, 226 Graham Rd, Sheffield S10 3GS; **TTYF INTERNATIONAL**, Kevin Warne, 48 Boscombe Avenue, Hornchurch, Essex RM11 1JG; **WALAMALAYSIA GAZETTE**, Dave Thorby, Flat 63, Cliffords Inn, Fetter Lane, London EC4.

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A space for the publisher to air his views

Basic or Advanced?

If you can remember all the way back to #3, you will remember Noel Williams comparing the Basic and Advanced games in response to the perennial question 'What is the difference between Basic **D&D®** and **ADVANCED D&D®**?'

Of all the role-playing games available, I think the **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®** game must be unique in having the two versions which are in some respects quite different.

Physically, their differences are strikingly obvious — one looks like the sort of game everyone was used to in the old days — a box, and dice rattling around inside — while the other looks like a set of books. But this turns out to be a superficial difference; after all, what's a set of dice and a crayon between friends.

The construction of the versions is, actually this time, quite different. The Basic - Expert - Companion (- Masters - Immortals) series is rather like the successive slices of a vertical pole, with each slice resting on the one before, and Basic sitting on the ground. A player whose character achieves level 4 will find nothing left in Basic — the move to Expert is vital if the character is to progress further — and, similarly, the 15th level character will find further rewards in the Companion set.

Advanced, by comparison, is more like the skins of an onion, with the Players Handbook and the DMG as the core and the other books providing additional — not vital, but certainly tempting — reference material. In theory at least, a player could develop a character up to 100th level and beyond without any more than the PH (and a long-suffering DM).

The difference in play can be quite marked or almost negligible. One of the more obvious differences is that the Advanced magic user can have a much greater repertoire of spells than the Basic counterpart. Similarly, Advanced has more magical items, more monsters (and, as it happens, more modules available). In other words, the option to make Basic the wide-open free-for-all need not be exercised by the DM and players, in which case it becomes to all intents and purposes a simplified version of Advanced.

But the wide-open nature of the Basic game, in contrast to the more extensive but restrictive and controlled Advanced, is the core of the difference of the two styles (there's something of a misnomer here — Advanced is probably harder to play well than Basic, but the gap between Advanced and Expert, and certainly between Advanced and Companion, is hardly noticeable if it's there at all). The two schools of thought are not, it seems to me, in opposition; rather, they are simply expressing a personal preference about the style of game they enjoy. A competent DM can, for instance, quite easily run an Expert module with Advanced characters; all this requires is to keep a careful eye open for inconsistencies, perhaps substitute a monster or two with a sensible choice from Advanced, and so forth.

Module S3 — **Expedition to the Barrier Peaks** was criticised by some purists when it was published, for here was an Advanced module with a strong element of science fiction, and those who believed in the integrity of Advanced felt that science fiction properly belonged to Basic. From personal experience, however, I can say that the module is well-enjoyed by the Advanced players who have tackled it.

Whatever we at TSR say about them being different games — and I think there is enough difference to justify this contention — the fact is that many people perceive them as the same. Folk generally use 'D&D' to describe them both; in my group of player friends we still talk about 'playing D&D' even though we switched to playing Advanced years ago (the general public don't seem to be aware of the difference, but I suppose the whole thing is a mystery to them anyway).

Polls, for what they are worth, can get confusing too. The player who votes for the D&D game may very well play Advanced, or a mixture of Advanced and Expert, or whatever, but quite often will simply write D&D on their voting form for simplicity, and that ends up as a vote for Basic. The fact is that the Dungeons & Dragons game, and not the Advanced variant, has come out the winner in many polls, yet I would guess that on at least a few occasions it should have been the other way around. But who cares? Polls are for casual interest or for those who want to prove something which is of monumental insignificance, at least in the gaming world.

Incidentally, this seems to disprove the notion that people talk about being involved with Advanced Whatsits rather than Basic Whatsits since that supposedly gives them additional prestige. And there am I trying to prove something of monumental insignificance.

Another interesting point. If you go to the USA you will see a variety of 'other' products on sale with one or other name on. Jigsaws, play-sets, monster masks, costumes, pencils and rubbers, plastic toys, pinball games, clay modelling kits — even Fantasy candy. Many of the more juvenile of these things are treated with disdain by the gamer, since they are directed at a younger age group 'and we've grown out of that sort of thing'. But the remarkable thing is that many of these juvenile products carry the 'Advanced Dungeons & Dragons' label rather than Basic. There is no apparent reason why this should be so — certainly it fails to match the assumed intellectual level of the product (either way, as it happens).

So Basic and Advanced don't really categorise standards of skill in play or difficulty of game-content. Basic is better than Advanced for the beginner, without doubt, because it introduces some rather unfamiliar ideas quite slowly and progressively. But having got beyond the novice stage, the switch to Advanced, or the progression up the Expert/Companion/whatever ladder, will be a matter of taste rather than skill. I know quite a few people who are quite happy to enjoy both...

Don Turnbull

The PHALANX
AN EPIC IN TWELVE CHUNKS by R. Grenville Evans
Chunk the Third: THE NIGHT of the CREATURE.
AFTER ONLY A DAY IN THE VILLAGE, OGRYN AND WEASEL FIND THEMSELVES IMMENSELY POPULAR AND ARE GUESTS OF HONOUR AT A MERRY DAYTIME BANQUET. THEY DANCE AND DRINK THEMSELVES TO SLEEP, BUT ARE WOKEN BY A TERRIBLE SNARLING... AND IT IS NOW DARK... AND THEY ARE ALONE.
I'M SURE IT WAS THUNDER! YEAH. MOST DEFINITELY THUNDER, AND SO NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF, EH!
OGRYN, DO SHLOW DOWN A BIT! FOR ONE WHO'SH VERY BIG, YOU HAVE GAINED A NIMBLE PACE!
THAT'S BECAUSE I BELIEVE SHOMETHING MUSH BIGGERUN ME IS COMING UP FROM THE REAR, WEASH!
UUH!
NO TIME TO WARN HIM! THE ONLY HOPE IS TO SHOVE HIM INTO THAT DITCH!
PHEW! THANKS, WEAS! SUDDENLY I'M NOT DRUNK ANYMORE! WAS THAT A...
YES... THAT WAS ...IS... A DRAGON! A REAL ONE!
OH, YOU'VE JUST GOT THE HORRORS FROM TAKING TOO MUCH ALE
WAIT FOR ME
WAIT!
WELL, COME ON THEN!
OGRYN, FOR A BIG MAN, HALF-BLIND FROM ALE, YOU RUN WELL!
MORE A QUESTION OF COULD WE KILL IT! ANYWAY, YOU'VE LEFT YOUR SWORD BEHIND... COME ON, LET'S MAKE FOR THE BEACH!
WEASEL, THIS IS NO TIME TO MAKE SANDCASTLES!
DOPE! IF WE CAN GET IN THE WATER, WE MAY BE PROTECTED FROM ITS FIERY EXHALATIONS!
DOH-OH-OH-OH - HERE IT COMES AGAIN!!
OUGHT WE TO SLAY IT? KNOWING THESE PEOPLE, IT'S PROBABLY ESCAPED FROM A FARMYARD OR SOMETHING...
DIVE! QUICK, OGRYN, DIVE!!
IT'S DARK! I MIGHT LAND ON ROCKS!
OKAY! STAY AND ARGUE!!

PERHAPS YOU HAVE A POINT THERE — AAAYYAAHHH
PFSAPH! PHLOWPH!
SPLUAAGHK!! WHO'RE YOU PUSHING?!
WEAS! WEAS! I'M OVER HERE! FOLLOW ME TO THE SHORE! I CAN SEE A CASTLE!
HUFF - HUFF - WHAT'S THAT LOUD PULSING NOISE?
IT'S THE BEATING OF THE CREATURE'S WINGS... IT'S SOME WAY OFF, BUT IT'S GETTING CLOSER... QUICK, WHERE'S THIS CASTLE?
WAIT - WHERE DID THAT COME FROM?
WHAT? OH! I DON'T KNOW - SOMETHING BUMPED ME - I THOUGHT IT WAS YOU, FLOUNDERING! AND IT WAS THE FIRST THING I GRABBED! A SWORD, EH?
IT'S A NICE ONE, TOO. IT CAN'T HAVE BEEN THERE LONG... THERE'S NO RUST ON IT!
WELL - YOU TAKE IT - I'M NOT MUCH USE WITH THEM.
BUT WHO GAVE IT TO...
WISE MEN DON'T ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT FREE GIFTS - SO NOR WILL I!
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT. HEY, IT'S FUNNY WE DIDN'T SEE THIS YESTERDAY WHEN WE WERE ON THE BEACH WITH HORKIN...
AHH! I KNOW - THERE ARE A LOT OF TREES IN THE WAY!
UHHHNN... IT'S STILL ODD HE... AAHH... DIDN'T MENTION IT, THOUGH... OHH!
GIVE ME SOME HELP! THE DRAGON HAS PUT DOWN SOMEWHERE, AND IT'S VERY...
...QUIET!
YIIIPE
WAAAAGHH!
EEUUUURRRPH!
WEAS!
IS THIS A SEVERE CASE OF DELERIUM TREMENS, OR A DREAM OF WEASEL'S, BROUGHT ON BY LISTENING TO OGRYN'S STOMACH NOISES, AND WEARING HIS BELT TOO TIGHTLY? OR IS THE BEAST A REALITY? OR NONE OF THE ABOVE? .... NEXT TIME, BLOOD IS SPILLED, A LIFE IS LOST, AND THE LADS ENCOUNTER A MERMAID.

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